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COMMONWEAL

CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY ISSUE

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Patrick White

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CORRESPONDENCE

God-talk isn't boring

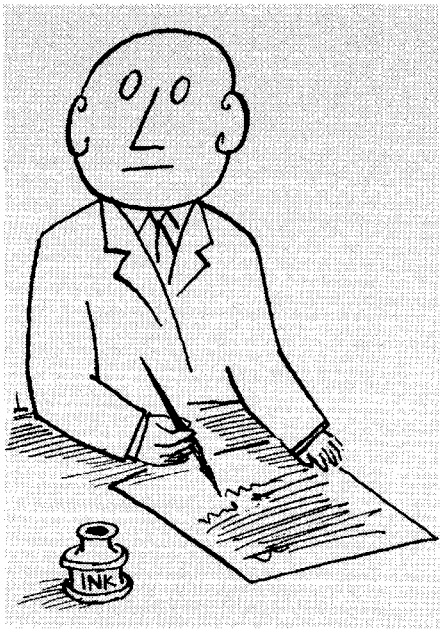
Alkmaar, Holland

To the Editors: The one helpful point that readers can pick up from Crystal Gomer's review of Anne Tyler's *Saint Maybe* [November 8] is that those who are embarrassed by people who talk about God shouldn't read the book. When I read the book (or devoured it, or guzzled it, in three days), I was overjoyed to find myself reading a book in which the word God is not printed within quotation marks. God and sin, penance and salvation are all there, as ordinary and everyday (as "beige," perhaps) as breakfast cereal and junk mail. Reading it, I thought not of Socrates but of Dorothy Day's well-known quote, "If I've accomplished anything it's because I'm not embarrassed to talk about God."

The reviewer wants to tell Ian, the novel's protagonist, that "Children are not to be taken on as reparation." In a perfect world there would always be people who took care of others for the right reasons. But, having taken on the care of the children for his own healing and salvation, Ian discovers that not only is he in fact healed, not only are his parents relieved of an enormous amount of work, not only are the kids reassured of a responsible adult presence, but Ian finds he loves them. This is boring?

I was excited to read a novel about the success of unpopular life choices. Those of us who have made the difficult decision to do something because we knew that not doing it would be unbearable (like bearing an unplanned baby) can only cheer when a book like this is written. Like one of the Annunciation icons, with Gabriel galloping in on the scene to announce a very big life change for Mary, this is very often how grace is dished up to us. Bang! Think fast! What's your decision? And only those people who choose the desert over the marketplace know how beautiful is the desert, how empty the marketplace.

Finally, if Ian is such a boring guy, and the woman he marries is so interesting, why does she marry him? Either she's desperate, or he's not boring. Given the upbeat ending of the book, I'd like to think that Ian is only boring to some people. He wasn't boring to me. NANCY FOREST-FLIER



Half-gay marriages

El Cerrito, Calif.

To the Editors: First, congratulations on the broad look at gay marriages in the issue of November 22. Second, there's a serious gap in the picture that needs to be filled. I speak of the experience of the two million or more straight spouses who unwittingly wed gay or lesbian partners whose sexual orientation had been denied, repressed, or closeted because of society's expectations and pressures from parents, priests, or psychiatrists.

Hartinger refers to the problem in passing. From five years of research into gay-straight marriages, I can attest that straight wives and husbands face a shattering crisis of identity, integrity, and faith when their partners' homosexuality comes to light. Worse, straight spouses, stigmatized by antigay attitudes attached to their mates, become an isolated minority without the support organizations available to the gay and lesbian partners. Few therapists or clergy understand the problems. While the profound dilemmas are eventually resolved, scars from deception and sexual rejection remain. Straight spouses are victims of victims of homophobia. Their story should no longer be ignored.

AMITY PIERCE BUXTON

The writer is author of The Other Side of the Closet: The Coming-Out Crisis for Straight Spouses *(IBS Press).*

Include me out

Berkeley, Calif.

To the Editors: I am really disappointed by your editorial on gay marriages. Despite your professed liberalism, you really accept the values of homophobic bigots within church and society. Proclaiming that gay people should have a place in society, you deny us that place and perpetuate that great harm by your hair-splitting rhetoric.

The right to associate is fundamental but is recognized and protected only for heterosexuals, not for gays. Your definition of marriage, confined within a biological and civil law framework, is incomplete and flawed. Mr. Hartinger's presentation of the "pro" side of the issue is also incomplete. Marriage is not just a "privilege" granted by society to certain classes. Your sym-

(Continued on page 44)

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COMMONWEAL

Behold, a mouse!

It is a sign of the times that the American Catholic bishops have been more successful describing the political responsibilities of their fellow citizens than in exploring their own teaching and pastoral responsibilities as bishops. Their statement on "Political Responsibility: Revitalizing American Democracy," prepared in advance of the 1992 elections, presents a forthright assessment of the lethargy that besets American politics, the need to recover a sense of the common good, and the many issues voters should analyze in considering candidates (*Origins*, October 24, 1991). In contrast, "The Teaching Ministry of the Diocesan Bishop: A Pastoral Reflection," adopted at the bishops' November 1991 meeting (*Origins*, January 2, 1992), is marked by a peculiar combination of formalism, verbal ping-pong, and curial rhetoric that are a sign of writers and agendas working at cross-purposes. The clear-sightedness that the bishops bring to our national political quandaries eludes them when they turn to their own.

This pastoral reflection was begun in 1985, conceived, it says, "by bishops for bishops," with the rest of us invited to look on. Its long gestation period bears the traces of ecclesiastical skirmishes over dissent; consultation on pastoral letters; the opinions of the faithful (confused and otherwise); collegiality; and the relations between bishops and theologians. Condensed from a far longer draft sent to the bishops in May 1991, this final document is a hodge-podge of these lingering quarrels interleaved with tantalizingly brief hints that bishops have practical as well as theological problems to contend with, cultural as well as catechetical ambivalences to sort out, personal as well as ecclesial virtues to practice. But with these nods to the trenches, the document takes the high ground offering firm and lengthy instructions on how to understand the office of bishop (in general), its responsibilities (in general), and, above all, the reception of church teaching by the rest of us. Nothing remarkable, we might say, though one effect of such generalizations is to focus attention not on effective teaching by the bishops but on docility and obedience from theologians and the faithful.

The erratic combination of practical observation and abstract formulation points up a historical and intellectual hole in the document's argument. Skepticism about any claims to authority is one of the defining characteristics of modernity. That was the rallying impulse that the Enlightenment directed at both ecclesiastical and civil institutions. The hermeneutics of suspicion permeates all modern societies, our own above all—whether in the informal query, "sez who?," or the more elegantly posed: "what unrecognized psychological impulse or self-interested rationalization lies behind the claims of authority?" And one of the reasons why the American bishops have to write a document defining and defending their teaching authority, in the first place, is precisely that the known history of ecclesiastical abuse lives on in the fears of their fellow citizens. One of the unexamined components of the

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debates over dissent in the church and Catholic bashing by the media is the apprehension among many Americans (Catholics, too) that ultimately the Catholic church does not really believe in freedom of speech. These fears gain support from the way the church treats its internal critics (shut up!) and responds to outside attackers (shut up, please!). This pastoral reflection seems neither to understand what religious authority is up against nor to be able to advance a compelling argument for such authority that would have bite in an individualistic and skeptical society. Mere repetition and assertion will not do.

Perhaps only in a culture like our own that disdains formal definitions of authority can we appreciate the value of the church's effort to articulate such definitions. Yet we also see how anemic these claims can be when they are set forth apart from a serious effort to grapple with the real problem: how to effectively exercise such authority in the here and now. The May 1991 draft, in fact, dealt ably and at length with the crisis in authority and the consequences for authoritative teaching; unfortunately it was deleted from the final document.

Another example of how this pastoral reflection betrayed its potential: It hardly helps when the American bishops can make no more than a stingy bow to the consultation process that they developed themselves, linking it simply to pastoral letters, as they write, on "contingent social issues." But they dismiss even that: "In the last analysis, however, the authority of the teaching does not stem from prior consultation." Yes, yes, the teaching is right (or wrong) if it is in conformity (or not) with Scripture, tradition, and the magisterium. Yet who can doubt that the pastorals on war and peace and on the economy derived an enormous amount of "authority" from the consultation process? Perhaps the process did not render them more "authoritative" in some sense of that word. They merely achieved greater depth, accuracy, and pertinence. People merely sat up and paid attention to what the bishops finally wrote.

When the bishops themselves seem to minimize what has proven one of their own most effective teaching practices, we should protest. Outward conformity to the concerns of Rome on this score cannot count for more than the bishops' own reading and understanding of the U.S. church. Such marching-in-lockstep is in the first instance dishonest, and in the second a disservice to local churches around the world who might benefit from adapting it to their own needs; Europe perhaps more than anywhere else.

In the same vein: theologians will no doubt welcome the acknowledgment that "theological faculties, Catholic universities, professional societies, learned journals, books, and monographs have been the customary setting for....theological investigation that ranges freely over many subjects and even challenges through careful argument the teaching of the church...." This is a softening of the views expressed in the statement of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, "Instruction on the Ecclesial Mission of the Theologian" (*Origins*, July 5, 1990). But how, we want to know, can the discussion of "private theological opinion," even in professional settings, be kept "private" in a free society? Should *Commonweal* cancel its subscription to *Theological Studies*? Should *Time*, *Newsweek*, and the *New York Times* cancel their subscriptions to *Commonweal*?

In the final analysis the bishops themselves may have had little commitment to "The Teaching Ministry of the Diocesan Bishop." By designating it a pastoral reflection, they spared the text the rigors of having to muster a two-thirds vote. The "Reflection" needed only a simple majority, which in the end was taken by a voice vote. A lack of consensus? A lack of confidence? Who knows? Clearly, the six-year labor that brought forth a mouse reflects the stasis of the bishops' conference, currently divided between bishops appointed with concern for the needs of the local church and those appointed, as one theologian has remarked, as apostolic vicars representing the interests of Rome.

In their statement on political responsibility for the 1992 elections, the bishops achieved clarity of thought and expression because they stand somewhat apart from the fray and are free to assess and judge our national situation. A document on their own teaching ministry is, of course, a different and weightier enterprise. There is more history and more tradition to take into account; the views of their fellow bishops and of Rome must be weighed. But still it is cause for dismay that they can say so little that is useful or apposite about their teaching role to those looking on—not just cranks who write editorials, but parish priests, teachers, catechists, and parish ministers, and the whole People of God who, after all, depend more than the bishops on good episcopal leadership.

PAGE, DATE, & VERSE

Starting with our previous issue—January 17, 1992—*Commonweal* began numbering each separate issue at "Page 1." We hope this change will assist readers, researchers, and librarians alike.

ET CETERA

LENNY BRUCE LIVES When you get right down to it, the chief impediment to ecumenical progress remains Roman Catholic triumphalism. And the problem is compounded by the fact that the mind set is not entirely homegrown. In fact, it has been reinforced by outsiders for generations. There is, for example, the long tradition of the Lenny Bruce criterion. It was the late comedian who first instructed grammarians that there was only one *the* church, and that that church was *the* Catholic church. Now, *Playboy* magazine compounds the ecumenical problem. According to *Copy Editor*, a national newsletter for professional copy editors, *Playboy*'s style manual offers the following rules for capitalization in its pages: "Capitalize *Bunny* when referring to the Playboy Bunny. Capitalize *Club* when used alone to refer to the Playboy Club. Always capitalize *Playmate* when referring to the girl on our centerfold, and try to avoid using the word in any other context. Capitalize *Church* when referring to the Catholic Church." With obstacles such as these, ecumenism may have to wait until *the* Church calls another council.

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'CIVILTA' HAS SPOKEN

BUT IT'S NOT THE LAST WORD ON WAR

"*But Was It Just?*" asks a forthcoming book (Doubleday, March) about the morality of the Gulf War. The volume continues the intense battle over the validity of the just-war theory as it was applied to that particularly modern war. For many, the book will raise more general questions about the authority of just-war teaching in Roman Catholic thought.

But Was It Just? includes contributions from Michael Walzer, George Weigel, Stanley Hauerwas, and Jean Bethke Elshtain. It also reprints, in an appendix, a controversial editorial on just-war theory published last July 6 by the Rome-based Jesuit magazine *La Civilta Cattolica* (the *Origins* translation appeared on December 18, 1991). Because of *Civilta*'s quasi-official Vatican ties, questions were asked: Did the editorial have papal approval? Did it signal a new direction in Catholic teaching?

Titled "Modern War and Christian Conscience," the editorial deserves careful attention. It has been criticized by some just-war advocates, but it ought to raise objections from Christian pacifists as well. For while its conclusion may be welcome to some—its authors reason that "the theory of the 'just war' is untenable and needs to be abandoned"—the editorial argues its case by means of just-war categories. In so doing, it grants them an unnecessary and fateful legitimacy, one that, like a computer virus, finally subverts the distinctive message of Jesus on peacemaking and violence.

Thus, while the editorial states that *per sua natura* modern war "cannot really be conducted according to the criteria required for a just war," and while it announces—without substantiation—that the Catholic church's opposition to war has now become "absolute," its argumentation is not convincing. For example, it states, but does not demonstrate, that war "always produces harm that far exceeds any advantages that may accrue in terms of justice and right." And it seems to accept at face value the classic just-war dictum of Francisco de Vitoria (1483-1546): "*vim vi repellere licet*," "it is licit to repel violence with force." Once such a two-edged sword is out of its scabbard, it resists constraint.

Vitoria's teaching is not that of Jesus, at least as Jesus embodied it in his life and words. Jesus' teaching may seem improbable in a world infected with sin and seemingly irredeemable. But it remains the teaching by which true Christ-likeness will finally be measured. The mystery is indeed nearly humanly unfathomable: that Jesus chose to emphasize forgiveness and self-surrender rather than retribution or the settling of scores. When it comes to Christians justifying violence, even for a seemingly justifiable cause, Jesus' standard still stares us in the face.

Writing in these pages after the publication of John Paul II's *Centesimus annus* ("Reordering the World," June 14, 1991), J. Bryan Hehir concluded that the pope's remarks during the Gulf War and in his new encyclical indicated John Paul had "drawn the moral barriers against the use of force" more tightly; and Hehir observed that where the pope is moving on this question "surely bears careful watching." While some would like to see in the *Civilta* editorial an indication of the pope's progress in abandoning the just-war theory, they are as likely to be mistaken as those who concluded in early 1968 that the papal birth control commission reflected the views of Paul VI on contraception. Nor should the *Civilta* statement that the church condemns modern war absolutely be taken as factual. Were such a revolutionary understanding to become church teaching, the pope himself would have to declare it, clearly, unequivocally, and without the use of platitudes, such as those offered in *Centesimus*.

No, while the *Civilta* editorial is good news—particularly its challenge that we all must oppose "the ideology of war" enveloping us—its arguments are not compelling enough in themselves to outscore the relentless justifications of the just-war theorizers, let alone the theory's advocates in Baghdad, Belfast, and inside the Washington Beltway. To do that, the editorial would have to begin from a different set of principles, principles grounded in another, higher authority. PATRICK JORDAN

REMEMBERING WW II

OHARI'S QUESTION

THE SILENCE RAN DEEP

I remember Ohari because of the human dimension he gave to the war. I was thirteen when the Japanese invaded Guam. Tall by Chamorro standards and big boned, I was mistaken to be much older and was put to work in a labor battalion along with the other men of my village, building a landing strip, which today is known as NAS Agana. Most of the work was done with hand tools—machetes for felling the trees, shovels for digging, burlap bags for carrying the dirt coolie-style as we leveled the ground.

The work left us lying exhausted on our mats each night, and it was during these dark quiet evenings that I got to know Ohari, a Japanese soldier. He wanted to study in the United States. It had been his dream long before the war exploded such things, and he would come to the village to learn English from my father in exchange for teaching us some Japanese. He was a strangely quiet man, given to long breaks in the conversation. He would look off into the dark as if he were drawing from the whispering bamboo some private wisdom. And there was about him that air of gentleness that forbade associating him with any evil. We knew of the executions of civilians, and later we heard of the rapes and the massacres; but the guilt by association that fell on our other captors escaped Ohari. It was as if he floated somehow beyond the pale of battle.

So it was that I could not bring myself to answer one evening

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when he innocently asked my father and me, "Why are we doing this? Why are we at war?"

My enemy was my friend, and I could not bring myself to hurt him. Nor could my father, and we lapsed into silence. Perhaps Ohari sensed our discomfort, for he did not pursue the answer that evening.

He did ask the question again later, when he came to say good-by before departing to face the imminent U.S. invasion. Finding us had been no easy matter. The pre-invasion softening up of the island had been going on for days, and we had been scattered. The good-bys were necessarily brief, but Ohari took a final moment to ask the question again: "Why is this happening? Why are we at war?" Seeing him there in full battle gear, his eyes haunted as if he knew a dream were eluding him, I was struck by the incongruity of it all, but again, I could say nothing. I suppose I sensed the completeness of the approaching end. Nothing before or after could ever be the same. Faced with such a cataclysm, we try to preserve the past in fallow ground. We try to leave its roots undisturbed. Finally, Ohari looked away, an expression of chagrin on his face as if we denied him the simplest of favors. And he moved off.

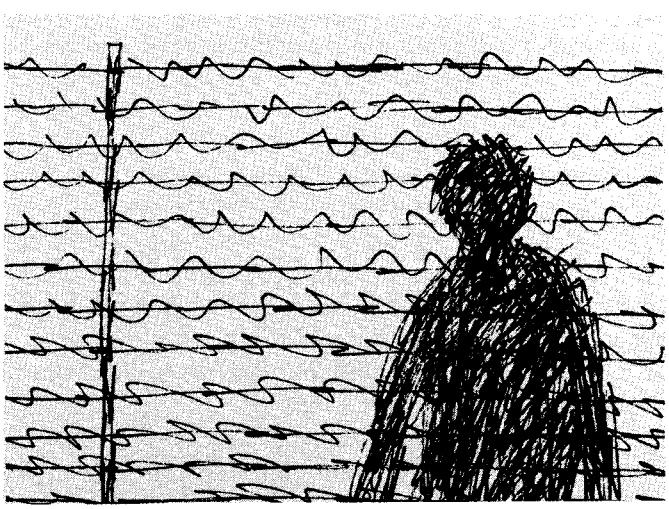
When the invasion began, we cheered the shell bursts. We cheered the destruction of our own homes, of everything familiar. It was like an incredible Fourth of July celebration, and we were elated.

I do not know what became of Ohari. Once the island was secured and our own scattered family reunited, my father and I searched the POW camps, but that was weeks after the initial landings. Perhaps he had been taken prisoner and moved. Perhaps he was one of the stragglers who maintained their private wars for endless months. Or perhaps he was dead. I do not know.

Things, of course, have changed since World War II. Once a sleepy backwater, Guam is now a burgeoning tourist mecca. The Japanese, who stormed the island by force, now arrive daily on 747s, occupy the hotels to capacity, and sunbathe on the beaches.

Something else has changed as well. All during our quest for Ohari, his question had stuck with me. I suppose it was because of the guilt I felt when I remembered the pain and disappointment on his face when he left us. But now having become a military man myself, having fought in two wars—Korea and Vietnam—I realize the pain he felt was not because we did not answer him, but because our silence was the answer. Confronted with what was about to happen, there was nothing that could be said. Had I been less naive, and had I not liked him so much, I might have blurted out some pat answer. In point of fact though, my silence—which I thought had brought him so much pain—proved to be the only solace I could offer him. BEN BLAZ

Congressman Ben Blaz is a nonvoting member of the House of Representatives from Guam.



REMEMBERING WW II

APOLOGIES ALL AROUND
IN ATOM'S FALL, WE SINNED ALL

At 7:30 A.M., December 8, 1941, [Philippines time], I sat in a dentist's waiting room seventy-five miles south of Manila. Office hours start early in the Philippines to allow time for a long siesta during the heat of the day. A Jesuit seminarian from Philadelphia completing my third year of teaching at Ateneo de Naga High School, I was one of eight or nine Americans in the town; I expected to be going home to the U.S. in a few months to study theology.

The woman sitting next to me asked, "Did you open your radio this morning?" I felt like saying, "Lady, we have better things to do early in the morning," but in fact I said nothing.

"The Japanese have bombed Pearl Harbor and Davao," she said.

I thought to myself, "This old lady doesn't know geography. She doesn't know that Pearl Harbor is eight thousand miles from Davao," which is in the southern Philippines.

From my expression she probably saw that I did not believe her. "If you don't believe me," she said, "then just look out the window."

I pulled back the curtains. Below me on the street a crowd of people were grouped around a radio; it was turned up loud enough for me to hear the announcement. "The United States of America will declare war on Japan."

That was the end of my dental appointment. I ran downstairs to join the group. Some in the crowd were constabulary police in khaki uniforms. We were at one side of the town plaza, in the center of town. It was getting crowded with excited people. I asked one of the people near the radio, "Did you hear the news about Davao being bombed?"

"Yes, and Clark Field, too." That really brought the war closer to home: An American air base north of Manila, Clark was on the same island with us.

A group of ten or more constabulary police with rifles and bayonets moved through the bazaars facing the plaza. As the crowd watched, they went into one Japanese store after another

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and soon had ten Japanese lined up with their faces to the wall, a constabulary member with a bayonet behind each prisoner's back. "Can't you do something about this?" a Filipino asked me.

"What do you think I can do?" I asked. Apparently he thought I could make a difference because I was an American dressed in a priest's white cassock.

"Speak to the captain. Tell them these people aren't enemies. Those bayonets might go into them if anybody slips."

I walked over to the officer who seemed to be in charge. "Can't you move your men back a little from the Japanese so there won't be any accidents here? They aren't trying to escape. They are known to everybody here in town."

"They are fifth columnists. We have orders to round them up."

"You can round them up without threatening their lives." Little did I realize that these same Japanese, who were standing there with their faces to the wall, would be in charge of the town jail one week later, the jail where I and other Americans would be prisoners.

Seven of us Jesuits were taken under guard to the Naga prison on December 13, 1941. Three years and three months later, February 23, 1945, we were rescued from Los Banos prison camp by American paratroopers.

As I marked the fiftieth anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack last month, I noted that the Japanese foreign minister and prime minister had expressed remorse for the attack, and that the Japanese parliament had discussed apologizing. President Bush said the U.S. would not apologize for Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

I am glad the Japanese apologized. They ought to. But even if they had not, we should. No moral theory supports the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We would do ourselves and the world a favor by apologizing for introducing the nuclear age by destroying two entire cities and their populations. We would benefit ourselves by an apology: "The quality of mercy is not strained. It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven. It is twice blessed....it blesseth him that gives and him that takes."

By refusing to apologize we lose that blessing. As a former American prisoner of the Japanese, I welcome their apology, and I repent and apologize for what "this nation, under God" did to the Japanese at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

RICHARD McSORLEY

Rev. Richard McSorley, S.J., heads the Center for Peace Studies at Georgetown University.

OF SEVERAL MINDS John Garvey

AN EYE ON THE SPARROW

ARISTOTLE'S GOD ISN'T OURS

God's eye, we read, is on the sparrow, on the lilies of the field, and on everything else: the hairs of our head, the heights we grow to, what we need to eat and drink—this is something about which we are reassured, in Scripture. If we seek the kingdom of God, "all the rest will be added." We are not to worry, in other words, if we are seeking the kingdom.

The first book about prayer that really moved me was Brother Lawrence's *The Practice of the Presence of God.* The essential message was that at every second we are faced with the fullness of God's presence. If we fail to experience it, it is not because God has somehow been withheld from us, but because our hardness of heart fails to respond to God's presence, fails even to feel or notice it. It is only through attention that we can begin to overcome this problem.

Then I pick up the newspaper and read about a small child being raped by a retarded relative, or a child being starved to death by his parents; or I see the misery of people who are mentally ill and are terribly, unfairly, afraid of undertaking the most simple details of getting through the day. There are, day after day, stories about the abuse or murder of children by their mothers' boyfriends. God's presence is there, too. Nothing happens. Nothing happens for the homeless who freeze to death, or for the people who look across the room at mates they once loved but now, for some reason, regard with absolute coldness. God is present—in some way—in all of these horrible situations, and nothing happens.

It's a little like the tale of stone soup: A hungry soldier promises to show a selfish old lady how to make soup with nothing more than water and a stone, but persuades her that it would taste a little better if he could only add a potato, some onions, some meat, some barley—all of which she adds, pleased at how clever she is to learn the secret of making soup with nothing more than a stone. Our belief in God's presence must look to nonbelievers something like this. How is it necessary? What does God's silence in horrible moments tell us about reality, or about God? How can a good God be present where children are tormented, and remain silent?

In *The Brothers Karamazov*, Dostoevsky's Ivan Karamazov tells his brother Alyosha the stories of children who have been horribly tormented and says, "The whole world of knowledge is not worth the tears of that little child to 'dear God'....I do not, finally, want the mother to embrace the tormentor who let his dogs tear her son to pieces! She dare not forgive him! Let her forgive him for herself, if she wants to, let her forgive the tormentor her immeasurable maternal suffering; but she has no right to forgive the suffering of her child who was torn to pieces, she dare not forgive the tormentor, even if the child himself were to forgive him! And if that is so, then where is the harmony? Is there in the whole world a being who could and would have the right to forgive? I don't want harmony, for the love of mankind I don't want it. I want to remain with unrequited suffering. I'd rather remain with my unrequited suffering and

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my unquenched indignation, *even if I am wrong*. Besides, they have put too high a price on harmony; we can't afford to pay so much for admission. And therefore I hasten to return my ticket....It's not that I don't accept God, Alyosha, I just most respectfully return him the ticket." (This is from the excellent new translation by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky, published by North Point Press.)

Any believer who has never felt this way lacks a human heart. It is a grace to feel the horror of our true condition, and that is the accuracy of Ivan Karamazov's reaction; but there is also the desire to control and contain our horror, to make sense of it (this is at least part of what is meant by wanting "to remain in my unrequited suffering and my unquenched indignation, *even if I am wrong*") and this is where we are helpless, and miss the point. (There is another way, of course, to deal with evil, and that is to abandon any sense that life has a meaning of the sort that makes our suffering so terrible; the tears of a tormented child are, from this point of view, only a kind of humidity. This is a philosophically tenable point of view, but most of its adherents don't, thank God, live its consequences out in their personal lives.)

If Christian revelation is essential to what we need to know, then the universe *as we need to understand it* is something we cannot know from within, on its own terms. Christians argue that revelation, the revelation that has made itself known in Christianity, is essential for understanding the universe and God's relationship to it. Anger at God for evil assumes that God is responsible for evil, because God is responsible for the universe. This is Ivan Karamazov's complaint. But in approaching the idea of God and God's responsibility for evil he assumes, as many Christians have since the Enlightenment, that the God of the deists and of Aristotle is the God Christians worship. This is God as prime mover, uncaused cause, the one who established a set of iron laws and walked away.

A more traditional answer to the problem of evil—still probably the best we will get, if answers of a philosophically interesting sort are what we are looking for—says that what has made evil possible is not God, but the freedom we have been given. To be made in God's image means that we are created free; to be free is to have the possibility of rejecting even the source of our creation and freedom—that is, to be free to sin. Paul says that death entered the world through sin, and even physical evils (floods and famine, cancer, and so forth) have been seen by many Christians as the result of sin itself. This is not to say that they are punishments, but rather that they are signs and consequences of a world in which evil has real power. From one point of view this seems naive, because we assume a universe in which "natural laws" and natural "evils" have a certain autonomy. We sense a difference between floods or famines or cancers that kill people, which can be accepted with a certain stoic understanding, and the evils that result from human hatred and human delight in murder and torture—these, because we are more directly responsible, haunt and anger us more.

There seems to me to be a connection between the two, however: when a man who is schizophrenic murders his neighbor, something connects "natural" and "human" evils. Something that arguably has a chemical and involuntary basis moves from the world of natural laws into the world of human freedom. Jesus cured people possessed of demons, who did what they did without choice, driven to self-destructiveness as drowning people are killed by floods; he also forgave adulterers, healed people who were blind, and calmed storms. In the earliest Christian picture of the universe there was no clear distinction between human and natural evil.

Many Christians have accepted a more or less deistic picture of God, perhaps because a God who has given nature a certain autonomy can be absolved more easily than a God who is made responsible for obvious horrors. We have moved away from Paul's idea that death and other evils have entered the world because of sin, which is to say because of us, rather than because of God. When we absolve ourselves of our own enormous responsibility for evil, by blaming God for the obviously enormous evil with which we are surrounded, we ignore some early clues—some indications at a lower level of what might be causes for evil on high.

Children who come from abusive families tend to become abusive; a child who does not learn how to love or be compassionate will have a hard time being compassionate. Their only freedom might even be so limited as to be a slight sorrow during the act of abuse or murder, a moment's remorse. There is a clue here to how our own indifference to those people whose misfortune comes close to us can increase evil.

At the same time, there is evidence from the lives of the saints that families and communities can be saved together. St. Basil came from a family that included many saints. A community of French Protestants resisted the evil time in which many allegedly Christian people caved in to nazism and saved the Jews in their midst. There is something collective here that challenges the two-tiered universe of the post-Enlightenment era, in which the natural and supernatural are clearly demarcated. Abusive families have their terrible gravity; but holy families and communities have a similar, powerfully liberating force. The stories of Christ calming the waters, the saints in whose presence wild animals were peaceful, and the fact that children who experience love and tenderness are even physically healthier than other children all ought to make us less simplistic in our pictures of a universe in which the natural and supernatural are cleanly separated. Ivan Karamazov was a young man, bitter, and saw his bitterness as a moral thing. An older man (unlike Ivan, he really existed) was recently canonized a saint of the Orthodox church: Father Silouan (1866-1938, a monk of Mount Athos), aware of every evil Ivan could imagine, lived constantly with what he claimed firmly was a God-given command: "Keep your mind in hell, and do not despair." This refusal to despair is possible because we believe, unlike Ivan, that there is "in the world a being who could and who would have the right to forgive."

I think it can be argued that precisely because of prayer the reasoning of a saint and the reasoning of someone who is not prayerful at all will work along radically different lines; reason is not autonomous, and grace does permeate the world. Of course this can't be *proven* to anyone, and that in itself is an essential part of what our freedom means.

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DUAL LOYALTIES IN CATHOLIC THEOLOGY

FINDING TRUTH IN ALIEN TEXTS

WILLIAM M. SHEA

Theology, as one among the humanities, is a reflection and a comment on texts. The great text for Christians is the Scripture which tells us of the life, death, and Resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth and of the foundation of the church in his name. These days some theologians use "text" in an extended sense; by analogy, the rituals, stories, symbols, and even the lives (here we come upon biography and autobiography) of the community's members are also texts. Thus, sacraments are texts. So Thomas Aquinas and Ignatius of Loyola are texts for Catholics; they are not for Protestants or Hindus, and Martin Luther and Sankara have not been texts for Catholics. Francis of Assisi is one of the rare bridge texts; his biography, like that of Gandhi, travels across barriers between churches and traditions. We also number among the Christian texts worth attention, comment, and argument the important historical statements that propose in doctrinal terms the meaning of Jesus' life and the meaning of the God whom we find in him.

But a problem arises: texts differ, texts breed commentaries, and commentaries differ. Differences are noted. Arguments begin. Argument can culminate in conversation in which everyone learns or it can degenerate into polemic in which no one learns. At the very outset Christians differed with the Jews on how to read the primal texts common to church and synagogue, and were madly driven to show that God no longer loved Jews nor they God. The Reformation was an argument over the meaning of texts that almost at once degenerated into polemic: The reformers called us Jews and we called them Gnostics. Right now the Catholic church is in a broil over the list and the meaning of texts. The broil is not only over what the central text means; if I am not mistaken, it is also over what are and are not central and acceptable texts to interpret.

This latter fact deserves some attention: some Catholic theologians regard texts from traditions other than Catholic important enough to comment on and, indeed, seem to think that texts which are not Catholic, and even not Christian, are theologically significant. In fact, I know theologians who spend their lives reading these alien texts not simply because they are interesting, nor only because they are important for interpreting the Christian texts, but because they are revelatory in their own right. Theologians, in other words, act as if they are no longer restricted to the texts of their tradition. This is an old story, and we are told in our academic lore of the use of the pagan texts by the church fathers and of Aristotle by Aquinas, and some even suggest that when Cardinal Ratzinger objects we hear the voice of Tertullian or of Bonaventure.

Be that as it may, some theologians begin to regard the alien texts and even the alien spiritual discipline as their own. The theologian's loyalty is soon subject to question, not least of all his or her own question. The theologian must come to understand the new loyalty and its relation to the old loyalty to Catholic and Christian texts. He or she must come to reckon with the words of Jesus about divided hearts. In the last analysis, of course, the church as a community will decide whether these texts are worth the attention of Catholics, but in the meantime this phenomenon divides the household of Catholic theologians.

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My subject, then, is the development of dual loyalties in theology. I will proceed in this fashion:

I. I will sketch in broad strokes the polemical caste of current theology and church life, and take that as a clue to a fissure in Catholic loyalties.

II. I will refer to the scriptural ideal against which the polemical atmosphere may be judged and try to lay out my own dual loyalty and explain it autobiographically.

III. I will outline several serious objections to my position, and then make a plea for conversation about the habit some theologians have of taking the texts of other traditions as their own and adding them to the classic Catholic texts—for one of the areas of crisis in the church and in theology pertains to this difference in theological and spiritual practice.

I

Before Vatican II, and within living memory, there were a few significant disagreements among theologians. In the decades before the council, Pope Pius XII had to warn a group of French theologians to end certain discussions they were having, for example, on the historical character of the Genesis account and the church's teaching that we are descended from a single original pair. The theologians, of course, had been reading other than Christian texts and were reading the scriptural texts in their light. In effect the pope shut them up.

John Courtney Murray was ordered to publish no more on his theory of church and state relations, a theory not derived from the Catholic tradition but from Catholic participation in the "American project." Teilhard, caught meditating deeply on the wonders of creation and science, had to put his marvelous and mythic manuscripts away. The few who were commanded to silence in those days kept that silence without public complaint, and kept at their work. It bore fruit at the council. Frankly, I admire that response—silence, patience, hard work, and especially vindication! It is an admirable form of Catholic spirituality. The theologians could at least take comfort in the fact that the bitterness of the integralist heresy hunts of the first half of the century was no longer acceptable and, though everyone remembered what might at any time happen to the theologically venturesome, something close to civility reigned.

Things changed. At the council it became clear that repressing the Modernists at the beginning of the century and the *Nouvelle théologie* in the middle had only delayed the inevitable need to struggle with the question of whether the "world" had something to teach the church as well as the church the "world," or, to put it in the terms introduced above, whether there are texts other than the Catholic classics to be read and mediated theologically. It also became clear that church leaders, theologians as well as bishops, did not agree on the value of the question much less on its answers.

Xavier Rynne, in his series of articles for the *New Yorker*, chronicled the days of preparation for the council and its first sessions, telling a tale as gripping as anything a church mouse like myself had ever read. Hans Küng brought it all home in his tour of the United States in 1962 when he uttered the first direct public criticism of Roman authority by a Catholic that I had heard in my twenty-six years. I watched transfixed in an auditorium at Yale University as he argued, in heavily accented English and with thrilling biblical logic, that the ecclesiastical war was over the liberty of the children of God, that the Scripture was the judge of the church's leaders, and that faith must shine forth in a church that had made too much of works. It sounded perfectly Protestant to me, and that is precisely what it was—an explosion of neo-orthodox Protestant rhetoric inside the Catholic church. Küng is a burr in this crisis in contemporary Catholicism because, among other things, he insists on reading alien texts and speaking in an alien tongue. To this day he often offends our Catholic linguistic piety by speaking of church leaders in terms that would please a devotee of the Protestant principle.

Rynne and Küng, taking a leaf from another book, changed thinking and perception. In the exhilarating and difficult thirty years since, the temperature of church discourse has risen. The church appears divided into rhetorical camps, each with aims and language for categorizing opponents. The most optimistic way of looking at this state of affairs would be to say that different portions of the church have developed into "publics," into informed bodies of people who know what is at stake for them, and who are willing to argue their case publicly.

At darker moments, however, we seem more a set of interest groups, defending turf and conniving to impose our will upon the church, or, in the case of the Left in these days, to avoid the imposition of the will of others. It is in these darker moments when the obedient silence of Murray, Teilhard, Congar, de Lubac, is so attractive. Even now we Catholics shut up when told to. Boff stopped and so did Matthew Fox. Theologians sign statements of concern, but with regret and caution, worried that even their moderate language is inflammatory. The old spirit is not entirely lost to Catholics—they do not, with few exceptions, rush to combat. Cardinal Ratzinger's letter on theologians strikes a ready chord in the Catholic psyche in the sense that Catholics remain peculiarly ill at ease with dissent and even with conversations that might lead to it.

The affair of Charles Curran, rhetorically restrained on both sides, taught us some lessons, one of which is important for this essay: In the Curran case, Cardinal Ratzinger resolutely refused to accord ecclesial status to Curran's texts, to the history and documents of academic freedom in the American university. In the cardinal's view, Curran's texts undercut Curran's Catholicity. Curran's equally resolute refusal to abandon those texts reveals their sacral status for him. The Catholic University of America may be Catholic, but it is no longer an American university in his view: It has surrendered its text.

While there is a "deep pit" between Curran and Ratzinger that even Abraham cannot cross bringing a drop of cool water from one to the other, I fear as well that the fissures between Catholic theologians run deep and are widening. The *odium theologicum* today is perhaps no worse and even may be less than at many points in the past—surely we could call on Muslims, Modernists, witches, Jews, Albigensians, and Huguenots as witnesses to what the Catholic church can accomplish when it sets

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its mind to hating, and in that light, things seem relatively mild at present. But still there is among theologians a great deal of line drawing, of branding the opposition as straying from the gospel path, of reasserting old patterns of authority and obedience, and of pitching liberal shibboleths at bishops and pope. Something very basic is at stake in the church. One wishes it were a matter only of personalities.

The issue appears at two levels. One is rhetorical—civility is surrendered, and one cares little about the mind and heart and feelings of those with whom one argues. Conversations cease, argument becomes perfunctory and a mode of attack or a solicitation of allies. One no longer argues with, one argues against. An argument is no longer an exchange meant to disclose truth but a way of upending the enemy. The theologians I read in the 1950s who argued about the indwelling of the Trinity meant to convince their opponents. Finding the truth or convincing the opponent is not the aim of most of the argument in the current Catholic scene: the truth has been found and the opposition is lost. With some few exceptions, I do not think there is a conversation at all, except within interest groups. Cardinal Ratzinger does not invite Edward Schillebeeckx, Charles Curran, or Leonardo Boff to Rome in order find out what they think or to persuade them to think differently. I doubt that Hans Küng and Joseph Ratzinger long for a conversation in which each hopes for theological illumination from the other.

The second level of fissure is closer to the heart of the matter. Catholic liberals and conservatives have become practicing separatists much in the style of American Protestant fundamentalists. The College Theology Society, the Catholic Theological Society of America, and the Catholic Biblical Association have been abandoned by their more conservative members and do nothing to recall them; the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars is the haven of right-wing theologians and intellectuals. If the ideologically fragmented theological groups celebrate the Eucharist together, it is most likely in large crowds and on occasions that cannot be avoided. In effect, there is little communion, not to say discussion, between Right and Left. We are witnessing a breakdown of ecclesial life.

II

There is an ideal against which all this can be judged. The ideal was stated in the midst of all those arguments and conversations that erupted at the very outset of Christianity, in every community of which we have any knowledge. There is one body though many members, one spirit though many gifts; there is one Lord, one faith, and one baptism; we are no longer Jew and gentile, slave and free, male and female, we are a new creature in Christ who saves us; how shall we be known except by the love we have for one another; we have put aside the old self and put on Christ; we are to love those who are our enemies, and turn the other cheek when we are struck. As John XXIII put the ideal to the council fathers, recalling an old saying: *in necessariis, unitas; in dubiis, libertas; in omnibus, caritas*. The organic unity and the practical life of the church in charity is a value which Catholic theologians, with few exceptions, have placed above convictions, theological opinions, and beliefs for centuries. That is why they are not Protestants and that is why they shut up when told to do so.

However, repression and even repentance do not end differences—they simply put them in a new frame of reference and control. Prudence and love for the church may subdue differences but they remain, and only a change of mind can remove them. The convictions must enter our conversation and reasons must be given for them. How can we disagree without destroying charity, without withdrawing from the table or being unseated? Since I cannot speak for the convictions of others, I shall speak directly only of my own, in hope of sharpening our perception of the impact of the alien text and focusing debate on it. I do not defend my position and my interpretation of the current scene so much as unfold it for the sake of discussion. Thus, autobiography has its place.

I did not begin as a liberal, but as a political and religious conservative, believing that Franco had saved Western civilization and the church by killing socialists, Communists, and anarchists, and that Senator Joseph McCarthy would save us once again. I was unable to vote for John Kennedy in 1960 on both political and religious grounds, and found myself in a crowd in Yonkers cheering Richard Nixon. I read the *National Review* religiously, was convinced by the philosophical reasoning against birth control, and could not for the life of me understand why anyone would want a vernacular liturgy. I stood aghast hearing Daniel Berrigan denouncing the American government and president for murder in Vietnam.

The drift to the Left was slow in coming and painful. I found out that William Buckley's views did not do much for the poor for whom I worked. I watched blacks being beaten (I still do), and Martin Luther King, Jr., killed. I watched the Vietnam War with growing horror and listened to the lies of my political leaders. And my religious change paralleled my political change. While as a child, watching Movietone News in a Bronx theater, I recognized the terrible sin of the Holocaust, only gradually I realized the difference my church should have made to the Jews between 1932 and 1945. Only then was the sin of my church against the Jews over centuries revealed and the myth of the impeccability of pope and bishops broken. Moreover, the council fathers, its *periti*, and its documents, tore down walls that had sealed me off from much of my past, my Catholic past as well as my political heritage, transforming my evaluation of the church, the gospel, and the world. No longer, for example, could I identify the church of my childhood with the spotless bride of Christ, without remainder.

Over the years a sea-change occurred in my understanding of and attitude toward my religious and political heritage. There is far more to Catholicism than the Counter-Reformation church, just as there are wells of experience and knowledge enshrined in the texts of other religions and of the Enlightenment and "modern secularity" which had been forbidden me. Some of this new awareness came to me through those *periti* who had to justify their every move by appeals to the Catholic tradition, but whose *geist* had something to it that was genuinely alien to Counter-Reformation and antimodernist Catholicism and perhaps to the Catholic tradition as a whole.

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The latter point is the crucial one for my case: the work of the council had its major sources in the Catholic tradition itself, but there was, and there remains, something else at work. About this Anne Muggeridge is correct: what she calls "the revolution" is not Catholic at least to some extent. The "revolution" in the council and its aftermath was a decisive, if not clean, break with the spirit of Counter-Reformation Catholicism at the very least; the counterrevolution that Muggeridge applauds is the political attempt to restore that spirit. In my terms, the counterrevolution wants to hold theology to the texts and mode of ecclesiastical text production and commentary of post-Tridentine Catholicism.

From the Reformed tradition and especially from Karl Barth, Küng learned more than a matter of rhetorical style, namely that the church cannot live honestly without public criticism, for its leaders cannot be simply counted upon to do the right thing. Bernard Lonergan not only argued with but absorbed Hume and Kant, Hegel and Husserl, and Droysen and Vico; Rahner studied with Heidegger and echoed his existentialism. Work on the texts of Aquinas shaped Lonergan and Rahner, but there was other leaven. The right wing—von Balthasar, Ratzinger, Muggeridge, James Hitchcock, and George Kelly—are not far off on this, for Rahner, Lonergan, and those other giants of twentieth-century Catholic theology spoke with a voice unfamiliar to the ear of my childhood Catholicism. They had, some would say, alien sources of mind and spirit. I believe now that the *periti* called on two interacting traditions for their theology and spirituality, one of which I would call "civil" for the lack of a better term, and by it I mean other voices in the city. The other is the tradition of the Great Church. I think they meant to reconcile those two traditions. This was the chief work of the council. After the debates of the past thirty years the question still remains: were they correct to do so? The present struggle in Western Roman Catholicism, while it often appears to be over what Vatican II meant, is in fact over whether the council was correct in what it did. In effect, Catholics are still fighting over the Enlightenment. Shall we listen or shall we not?

By now it should be clear what I mean by the claim that I have two "texts." My religious and theological liberalism has to do with years of reading the works of American philosophers and theologians who had little but contempt for my church, and this includes nearly every American thinker from Jonathan Edwards to John Dewey and the Niebuhrs. The contempt outraged me, but their thinking about the meaning and forms of human life fascinated and held me, and still does. I rely on them now to keep me from misunderstanding God and the church. Theology for me runs between and among the texts, mediating one to complete the other. I do not think this is a supra-ecclesial spirituality; in fact, I believe it is the most pressing task, the most prominent method, and the most glorious opportunity of contemporary Catholic theology.

Let me list a few of my convictions that I attribute to sources other than Catholic:

1. Democracy is not a political organization to be equated with a constitution and a bill of rights and the division of powers in a state. It is primarily a quality of human relationships that pervades or should pervade all aspects of life, including one's religion. Authentic religion and an authentic religious community are democratic. John Dewey is correct.

2. Democracy is based on freedom of inquiry and communication, and freedom of inquiry and communication are essential to it. The search, discovery, and communication of truth is not only a means but also an end. It is the practice of democracy. The consequent conversation and argument are democratic experience. Dewey is correct again.

3. Loyalty to the human community is an ideal that transcends loyalty to tribe, nation, class, and to church. The human community is the fact, not the abstraction; individual self-interest and tribalism, including Catholic tribalism, are the abstractions. Josiah Royce is correct.

4. Pluralism of beliefs is a blessing, not a curse. It may be a stage in the quest for truth, but it is a blessed stage. It ought not preclude conversation and argument; it requires them. William James is correct.

5. All traditions and authorities are subject to the test of experience and reason, and all are subject to criticism, including the Enlightenment values and the Christian movement and its teachings. That obligation to criticism is individual as well as communal. Kant is correct: one must assume responsibility for one's beliefs and questions as well as one's actions.

6. Theology is not only *fides quaerens intellectum*, it is also *intellectus quaerens fidem*. Here I would interpret the first to mean that theology proceeds from faith and is a reflection on its meaning; and the second, to mean that in the modern context, belief is always accompanied by questions about its truth and these questions accompany the act of reflection from beginning to end, questions which are not finally answered. In every instance theology must take account of its unbelief as well as its belief. The Enlightenment criticism of traditional theology is correct: ecclesiastical dogmatism makes genuine faith and belief impossible.

Theology, then, mediates the message of the church to the world but also the messages of the world to the church. I do not think a theologian can do otherwise than to take the human family as his or her own, and its religions and philosophies as his or her own, and to search the intellectual and spiritual terrain for proclamations *to the church* at the very same time as he or she interprets for the culture-at-large the faith, hope, and love of Catholics. To this extent the theologian has traditions and not simply a tradition. The theologian draws on all promising human traditions even while the church serves as a community of life and belief. We are no longer in a single tradition on which we can draw for spiritual sustenance; we are in traditions of faith and we can and we must draw upon them.

While I was in the church when I came to these convictions, I did not learn these things from the church. I think it is also fair to say that I hold these views with religious intensity. They, in part, make up a spirituality, a way of being religious not simply in philosophical thought but in action, in the bent of my life. The propositions listed above are in part what I mean by liberalism, and I suspect that many Catholics share them. Finally, I

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believe the convictions are responsible for much of the present broil in the church, because the leaders of the church and some Catholics do not believe these and regard them, quite rightly, as alien to the ecclesial tradition.

Once qualifications have been added and once we have reaffirmed the justice and prescience of long-standing Catholic, and especially papal, criticism of modernity, it remains that many Catholic theologians now stand firmly within the liberal and Enlightenment traditions as well as within the tradition of their own church. The double rootage of Catholic theology appeared above ground several times in our century and was buried again. The council uncovered it, and it was nearly unchecked between the council and 1979. Even as they criticize the Enlightenment in the name of the wisdom found in the church, the Enlightenment is as much the theologians' home as is the ecclesial tradition.

III

This dual loyalty creates a problem, does it not? Is it possible that one could reasonably and in good conscience draw on traditions which have been antagonistic to one another over centuries? I confess that my conscience is not entirely at ease. For one thing, I am not a holy man, and my powers of spiritual discernment are unrefined. Moreover, my religious tradition is so massively at odds with so much of the Enlightenment that, in my twenty-year tightrope walk, I often have difficulty seeing steadily how the two might fit together. Let me pose the problem of "fit" in three questions that have been put to me by friends:

1. Are not liberals in the last analysis merely romantic Catholics whose intellectual vision and beliefs are essentially secular? Aren't we like Reform and Reconstructionist Jews who, as their Orthodox and Hasidic co-religionists charge, no longer share an orthodox faith but nonetheless practice Judaism as a form of religio-cultural homemaking? Do we *feel* like Catholics but no longer believe?

2. Do we not distort the church by importing an alien vision of a political community as the standard for church life? Do we allow our liberal politics to set the agenda for the church, turning the church into another social organization with a "viewpoint," and no gospel to speak of?

3. Aren't we professional theologians a "religious elite" and a "knowledge class" whose "new class" interests lead us to espouse liberal causes and grasp for power in the church? Isn't it we who have lost touch with the realities of the church, of the gospel? Aren't our causes and prejudices the same as those of the American academic elite and no longer those of the church?

I am annoyed by these questions—and they worry me. More than my besetting sin, logical inconsistency, is charged here. I am being indicted for selling out. The questions force me back upon presuppositions, for the very charges themselves reveal to me that I no longer share the view of theology that undergirds them. As a consequence, I am driven to justify again and again, to myself and others, the theology that has crept upon me over the past three decades. How can a theologian consider himself or herself responsible to a secular tradition of thought and action and yet still think of himself or herself as a Catholic theologian?

If one answers "yes" to any of my three questions, even adding qualifications, has not one resigned in fact from the fellowship of ecclesial theologians whose sole task is the interpretation of Catholic texts? Has not one thereby justified the separatism now so much part of Catholic intellectual life?

There is no ready answer to these objections. Here I merely wish to expose my position and the objections to it, and as well to make the claim that my position is shared deeply and widely among my colleagues though they often do not advert to it. The change in Catholic theology cannot be accounted for by the disingenuous claims of some liberals that they are recouping earlier Catholic sources of liberalism. The rightist opposition is justified in its claim that the liberals are importing something new. While it is true that at some important moments in the past Catholics acted as though "nothing human is alien" to the church, that maxim has become systematic and commonplace in the thought and action of many Catholics, and especially many theologians, only since Vatican II. They are willing to find value even in what has been historically alien to the church, in what has pitched itself against the church, and what the leaders of our church have condemned and still condemn. They assume increasingly that their Catholic classics belong to all, and that world classics are theirs as well.

Cardinal Ratzinger and others represent, in my view, an older spirit, perhaps the spirit of post-Tridentine Catholicism and of the pastoral epistles. His is the spirit of guardianship, of responsibility to what has come to be, of testing, of decision, of crisis, a spirit which strives to take the whole church and its life into account. It is the spirit of *unitas in necessariis*, the spirit that has kept Catholicism united for centuries. It inclines to be a suspicious spirit, the spirit of a father who sees a child playing too close to the road, a spirit nervously sensitive to the sound of a strange voice, the voice of a prophet, say, or of straying sheep, or of a wolf. It is the spirit of the church overseer who, as Paul said, must take note of the ears which itch for new things.

But since the council, there are different spirits in our land and in other lands acting in peculiar ways and speaking in peculiar tongues. In Latin America that spirit speaks with the tongue of religious reformation, and of political and economic revolution, a spirit seeking and finding new connections between the gospel and the culture. They intend continuity with the church of the ages, certainly, but they draw on new sources of thought and action as well as the old, sources different from their more cautious contemporaries. Likewise in Asia, Catholic theologians find new resources of spirit in Buddhism and Hinduism, and as a result there are now Catholic ashrams, Catholic Zen masters, Catholic yogis. Matteo Ricci is taking his revenge on Rome at long last.

In our country one theologian pores over the tomes of the structuralists and the deconstructionists, the texts of the current academic culture, assessing them for the church and measuring their assessment of the church. Another finds a source of ethical principle in the history and experience of the American university. A third wanders the pathways of New Age consciousness seeking

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the truth of this curiosity, and finds that path to illumine and to be illumined by Catholic mystical theology. A fourth pokes through the pericopes of the patriarchal gospels to a text behind our text, and finds hidden there an egalitarian church and a hope for women different from that of his Eminence and his Holiness. No wonder the cardinal is a bit pinched, worried, and determined in his guardianship. He has no easy time keeping the sailors on board; they return from shore leave with very odd gifts indeed.

The spirit that comes to birth in the base communities of Latin America cannot simply be equated with the spirit of the theologians of North America. But compared with the spirit of the cardinal, North and Latin America are at one. In one sense they do what Catholics at their very best have always done: absorb, appropriate, baptize a new and foreign culture. But in this case they do it in a culture which has risen despite the consistent and even violent opposition of their church. They try to fulfill what they believe is the mandate of the council and so of the Holy Spirit, appropriating the authentically human wherever it is found. They are living out a Catholic journey that has been named by John Dunne a spirituality of passing over and coming back, a bumpy road indeed.

There will be mistakes, both by those who journey and those who warn. The danger is not mistakes—from these we may all benefit—but separatism, polemic, suspicion, resort to ecclesiastical power, evasion, dissimulation, disingenuousness: these unworthy things will hurt us now as they have in the past. They must be replaced by argument, by open disagreement, by conversation, if the church is not to suffer again the wounds it suffered at the beginning of this century. Though the conversation partners have good reason to suspect one another, they have no theologically or religiously justifiable reason to cut off conversation as they have.

RECAPTURING THE GREAT TRADITION

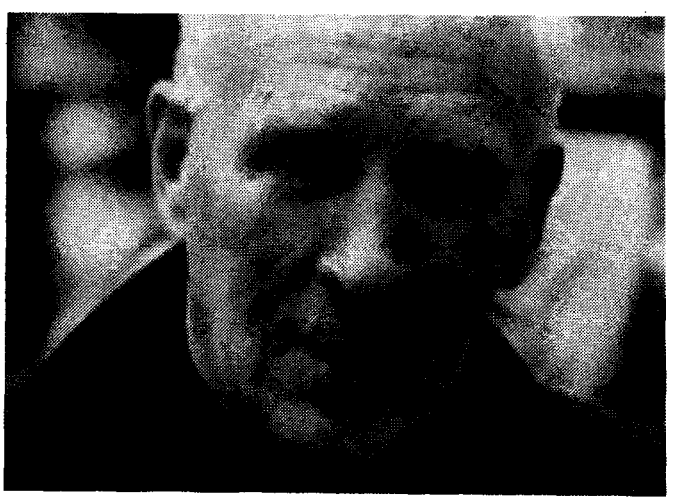
IN MEMORIAM: HENRI DE LUBAC

JOSEPH A. KOMONCHAK

The theological career of Henri de Lubac (1896-1991) spanned the major moments of twentieth-century Catholic theology. He began his studies in the 1920s, amidst the antimodernist reaction, when what he called a "separated theology" reigned supreme. In the 1930s and '40s, he attempted to overcome this cultural alienation by an effort that combined a scholarly recovery of the great Catholic tradition and a demonstration of its power to illumine contemporary life, a power illustrated in his own courageous activities during the Nazi occupation of France. His questioning of the adequacy of modern theology kept him under suspicion in the 1950s. Rehabilitated under Pope John XXIII, he took an active role in Vatican II. In the decades after, he was an active promoter of the council's teaching and defender of its theological vision from critics on both the Left and the Right. In 1983 Pope John Paul II expressed his own and the church's debt to him by naming him a cardinal.

As his *Mémoire* (*Sur l'occasion de mes écrits*, 1989) makes clear, de Lubac never claimed to be an original or a systematic theologian, and he admitted his philosophical, linguistic, and historical limitations. He wanted, he said, to be simply a vehicle of the great Catholic tradition, on the one hand revealing its true breadth and depth to the church itself and, on the other, handing on that heritage by showing the relevance of its central insights and values to the problems of this century. These two concerns were already visible in his first book, *Catholicism* (1938), and they remained the determining purpose of his whole life's work.

De Lubac's influence has been immense. His several historical studies helped restore the sense of mystery, rooted in the Eucharist, to Catholic ecclesiology. His book *Surnaturel* (1946) was a major factor in overcoming the fatal disjunction that modern theology



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had placed between nature and grace. His history of exegesis helped prepare for the reintegration into biblical studies of hermeneutical and literary methods. His books on Buddhism pioneered Catholic participation in interreligious dialogue. Few Catholic theologians today, whether they know it or not, are not in his debt.

Soon after de Lubac's death on September 4, 1991, Avery Dulles gave a fine and sensitive description of his theological project in the pages of *America* (September 28, 1991). I would like to comment briefly on the "later de Lubac," and particularly what is sometimes thought to have been a "conservative" shift in his thinking after the council.

De Lubac's rehabilitation began in 1960 when Yves Congar and he were appointed consultors to the Theological Commission set up to prepare doctrinal schemata for Vatican II. Congar has described a meeting in Lyons at which the two men discussed whether to accept the appointment. They wondered whether their appointment was not something of an afterthought—de Lubac noting that the commission would have twenty-seven members and twenty-seven plus two consultors. He feared that the commission would be dominated by Roman theologians and that as mere consultors, unable to vote or even to speak unless requested, Congar and he, on the one hand, would be unable greatly to influence the work, but, on the other hand, would be prevented from criticizing it. Still, in the end, both men felt that they could not turn down an offer that seemed to have been made at the insistence of the pope himself.

The fears of the two men were largely verified: they had perhaps more opportunities to participate in the commission's work than they had anticipated, but the doctrinal texts prepared for the council showed very little influence of their contributions. De Lubac worked on the subcommission that wrote a text entitled "In Defense of the Purity of the Deposit of Faith," a grab bag of a text, addressing areas of faith considered then under attack. His paper on the proofs for the existence of God and his defense of Teilhard de Chardin had little effect on the final document. (When the book on Teilhard that he wrote at the request of his Jesuit superiors appeared, it was criticized in *L'Osservatore Romano* by one of his fellow members of the Theological Commission.) Worse still, a fellow-Jesuit, Eduard Dhanis, included in a chapter on doctrinal development a paragraph that condemned an opinion that had been unjustly attributed to de Lubac in the course of the debates that had ended with the 1950 encyclical *Humani generis*. De Lubac at one point considered resigning from the commission in protest; but Congar's appeal to Dhanis and the latter's vague reply that the problem could be settled later (the offending paragraph was never withdrawn), it seems, led him to reconsider and to remain on the commission. Long after, he spoke of having been something of a "hostage, sometimes even a defendant" on the Theological Commission.

At Vatican II, de Lubac took part in the effort that led to the rejection at the first session of the texts prepared by the Theological Commission. He influenced several of the most important of the conciliar documents, most notably the sacramentally centered ecclesiology of *Lumen gentium*, *Dei verbum's* discussion of revelation and tradition, and the treatment of atheism and Christian humanism in *Gaudium et spes*.

It was in the course of the preparation of this last text, during the council's fourth session, that de Lubac began to express reservations about what was happening at the council. As he saw things, the recovery of the great tradition to which he had dedicated his life, and which was finally succeeding, appeared to him to be endangered by a minority of "progressives," effectively aided by the media, who thought it necessary to go beyond what they called "abstract theology" to the "real questions" posed by the "world." For de Lubac this was never an acceptable alternative and represented a loss of confidence in the capacity of the tradition to provide grounds for addressing the valid themes of reform, updating, openness to the world, religious freedom, etc. After the council this criticism became even sharper in a critique of what he called a "paracouncil" that had hijacked and deformed Vatican II's purpose and accomplishments.

These criticisms of postconciliar theological developments puzzled many observers, especially those for whom "liberal" and "conservative" remain all-embracing categories. The real clue to his stance, which remained remarkably consistent throughout his life, lies on the level of basic theological method.

One effect of Vatican II was the rapid collapse of the unitary neoscholastic method developed and officially imposed in the modern era, a development to which the council itself had contributed when it discarded the somewhat telegraphic dogmatic style typical of earlier councils and chose a more diffuse, persuasive rhetoric, closer to that of the fathers of the church than to the Scholastics, more meditative and symbolic than reflective and systematic.

But if the majority of bishops and theologians at Vatican II were united in opposing the neoscholastic system, they were not agreed as to what was to take its place. It was in responding to this question that the majority at the council began to divide, somewhat in the way that the Solidarity movement in Poland began to fracture when its great enemy lost its power. There had always been tensions within the conciliar majority, but they were hidden during the council by a common effort to break open the stifling system to which modern scholasticism had reduced the traditional heritage of the faith. When that system crumbled, the solidarity among its opponents began to crack. One group, represented most strongly by Karl Rahner and Bernard Lonergan, continued their transposition of Thomism into categories more appropriate to an historically conscious age. Another group moved rather in the direction of a political theology (Johann Baptist Metz, Edward Schillebeeckx) that soon gave birth to liberation theology (Gustavo Gutierrez, Leonardo Boff). Others turned rather in the direction of a hermeneutically centered theology (David Tracy, Jean-Pierre Jossua).

Henri de Lubac was among those (Hans Urs von Balthasar and Joseph Ratzinger are two others) who chose to continue one of the major lines of inquiry and expression that had made the council possible, the one particularly reflected in the conciliar texts on the liturgy, revelation, and the church. This essentially consisted in a recovery of the great tradition, particularly as

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represented by the church fathers and the monastic theologians of the early Middle Ages. These saints and theologians had produced a grand Christian vision, self-confident and comprehensive, catholic in its breadth, humanistic in its depth, not yet narrowed by the polemics that followed the two great schisms within Christianity, not yet placed on the defensive by the Aristotelian challenge of the thirteenth century, by the threats of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, and by the economic, political, and cultural revolutions of the modern era. De Lubac's work in the history of theology represented a revalidation of the symbolically mediated thought of the first Christian millennium, and his work was among the most important factors in the council's reappropriation of the themes and expressions of that age. He had a right to consider the council's major doctrinal texts as a vindication of his conviction that the great tradition could have modern redemptive significance.

In certain forms of postconciliar theology he saw a revival, in an opposite political direction, of the same sorts of separation that he had opposed since his youth. He feared that the division between the "laws of society" and supernatural revelation that had permitted so many Catholic theologians to endorse the right-wing *Action française* was visible again in those who after the council looked to Marxism for social analysis and prescriptions. Once again, he thought, the faith was being trimmed to meet what other philosophies could allow, and the sense was being lost that the faith might provide a basis on which Christians could address the real problems of contemporary humanity as at least an equal, if not a superior, partner. Christianity was once more in danger of becoming a superficial addition to other essentially complete world views.

It is important to understand this point. For de Lubac the question was not whether Christianity ought to address the contemporary world. There is not the slightest indication that later in his life de Lubac wished to see theology retreat again into the exile from the world to which it had once confined itself. His late works continued to evoke the figures of great Christian humanists of the past (e.g., his book on Pico della Mirandola) and to study the impact of theological ideas on human history (e.g., his volumes on Joachimitism). He remained to the end a fierce critic of a "separated theology."

Some of his judgments on contemporary postconciliar events and theologies may be questioned—I do not believe that he was always accurate or fair in his descriptions of their views. But I think the more important difference that sets him apart goes back to some of his historical studies. These traced the origins of the exile of theology not only to the secularized anthropologies of post-Reformation scholasticism, but also to the shift from symbolics to dialectics that he saw as the main feature of medieval scholasticism. He was never entirely convinced of the success or legitimacy of the great Thomist attempt to "baptize" Aristotle in the thirteenth century. He contrasted the inclusiveness of the church fathers, "those masters of ontological symbolism," to the "dialectical antitheses" of the "Christian rationalists of the Middle Ages." In this judgment on the medieval, and even the Thomist, effort, there was a great contrast between de Lubac and scholars like Congar, Chenu, Rahner, and Lonergan. For de Lubac, if much had been gained by the rise of scholasticism, much had also been lost.

In David Tracy's typology, de Lubac always exemplified a theological method oriented primarily to "manifestation," to the articulation of the distinct vision of God, self, and world opened up by revelation. This vision has its own density, its own logic, its own beauty. It is a positive fact, unveiling a world to which Christians, convinced that it corresponds also to the deepest desires inscribed on the human heart and mind, should simply invite others to enter. Its historical model is the construction of the Christian world vision by the fathers of the church.

This vision and method Tracy contrasts to a "correlational" approach, for which the confrontation between the faith and the contemporary situation is a critical and self-conscious methodological necessity. Its historical model is the Thomist effort to rethink and to transpose theology in the light of the new challenges represented by Aristotelian and Arabic philosophy and science in the thirteenth century. The council adopted something of this approach in its later documents, particularly in *Gaudium et spes*, and several postconciliar developments, such as political and liberation theology, exemplify it.

There is a certain parallel between de Lubac's reservations about the Thomist project and his criticisms of postconciliar theology. He was never quite comfortable with the various efforts to acknowledge that modernity in its various aspects might require

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transpositions, both methodological and substantive, similar to the ones attempted by St. Thomas. He always felt far more at home in the world of the church fathers than in that of the medieval Scholastics. Perhaps it is significant that he hardly ever referred to the work of Lonergan and Rahner.

Developments both inside and outside the church have made the approach exemplified by de Lubac, as also by Hans Urs von Balthasar and Joseph Ratzinger, again popular. Within the church, there is a widespread view that the last generation, dominated by a correlational method, has been conspicuously unsuccessful in transmitting the essential Christian faith. The influence of linguistic theory and even of antifoundationalism in philosophy has led to a new sympathy for an epiphanic model by which to communicate the faith, both in catechesis and in theology, as a distinct and substantive source of light and knowledge.

These typologies, of course, are somewhat schematic. On the one hand, there can be no correlation or confrontation unless there is something that stands over and against the contemporary context with a life and substance of its own. On the other hand, some anlaysis of the contemporary situation, its strengths and needs, and some underlying anthropology also must guide the particular reading of the tradition offered by the most epiphanic of preachers and theologians. It should be possible to overcome the assumption that one must simply choose between these two different methods.

Anyone interested in attempting this task will have to take the work of Henri de Lubac into account, not only because of his historical contribution to the redemption of Catholic theology in the twentieth century, but also because of his exemplification of the essential tasks of theology as the transmission of the one faith which is supposed to be at once the soul of the church and redemptive revelation for the world and which cannot really be the one without being the other. For these reasons, one may make one's own the words with which Yves Congar ended his review of de Lubac's memories of his life's work: *Deo gratias!*

Setting aside my choice to be silent

Bernard Häring, the distinguished moral theologian and former professor of Rome's Alphonsianum Academy, now lives in retirement in Gars, Germany. In February, Paulist Press will publish *My Witness for the Church* ($14.95), his interview-based autobiography translated from the German by Leonard Swidler. The volume is a particularly rich source of Häring's recollections of the preparatory period of Vatican II, the council itself, and developments following the council. Appointed to the papal birth control commission by Pope John XXIII and reappointed by Paul VI, Häring by all reports played a key role in the commission's discussions, as much because of his spiritual "presence" as because of his theological learning and wide pastoral experience. In the brief excerpt presented here, Häring discusses his reaction to the publication of *Humanae vitae* and his decision to speak publicly on the subject.

How did you experience the publication of Humanae vitae?

I was at that time lecturing in the U.S.A. Two journalists from *Time* and *Life* sought me out about five days before the publication of the encyclical and gave me a copy of the text, with the condition that I would grant them an interview on the same day that the encyclical would be published. I asked them how they came to have the text. Answer: "It cost us only a few thousand dollars!" I took the copy of the text, but protested and rejected vigorously the condition of cooperating in a matter which obviously dealt with an immoral action. I could understand the curiosity of the journalists better than the Vatican seller of such a document. I immediately withdrew to a "house of prayer" in California and gave my address only to my superior. My aim was to pray a long time and to be silent even longer. As I read the text a good twenty times I gratefully discerned that there were also very beautiful things said about the meaning of married love. It was also clear to me that the new encyclical spoke no longer of the *crimen* (crime) of contraception. In contrast to *Casti connubii* [1930], it contained a decriminalization. Nevertheless, the norm that every marriage act without exception must remain open to conception appeared to me as an incommunicable statement in view of the following explanation that the natural methods (probably choosing only the infertile period) were in line with this fundamental principle. I could see the crisis of conscience this would cause many people, but still I hoped that the relatively mild approach would be understood as tone-setting.

Soon after the publication of the encyclical, however, the telephone kept ringing off the hook. Somebody must have betrayed my place of retreat. Theologians, well-thought-of priests, and doctors said to me on the telephone that they were thinking about leaving the church. Why? Many more serious injuries had occurred in church history. Often the answer was given to me: In no less than the *Osservatore Romano* there appeared a demand by Cardinal Felici that whoever does not accept the encyclical in obedience and in belief should leave the church. With that one blow my determination to be silent on the question was set aside....

How could you as an individual, an individual fighter so to speak, hope to do something against so serious a danger?

Of course I was not at all certain that a brave attempt would be successful. Would it become a call in a many-voiced concert to remain in the church, or would the call

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of an individual find only an empty echo?

I was asked whether I would sign the declaration of a large number of American theologians who had gathered in Washington. The question was about the effectiveness of a joint action. I agreed with the heart of the declaration, namely, that there are marital situations in which following the strict norms without exception, that is, the strict prohibition of artificial birth control, may not be urged. Nevertheless, I did not want to put myself in the position of being accused of having co-organized a collective protest.

After a night spent in prayer I came to the decision that out of love for the church I owed it to the "people of God" to express my viewpoint openly, whatever the consequences for me personally might be. I trusted in the grace of God that I could loyally and with inward calm remain within the church, even if I would be subjected to sanctions.

Thus I issued the following declaration: "Whoever can be convinced that the forbidding of artificial means of birth control as stated by *Humanae vitae* is the correct interpretation of divine law must earnestly endeavor to live according to this conviction. Whoever, however, after serious reflection and prayer is convinced that in his or her case such a prohibition could not be the will of God should in inner peace follow his/her conscience and not thereby feel her/himself to be a second-class Catholic."

On the following day my statement appeared on the front page of the *New York Times* and the most popular newspapers of other countries. I certainly had not expected that my lone voice would find such a worldwide echo. Hundreds of Catholics later assured me that because of my voice they had resisted the temptation to leave the church.

I immediately wrote my article, "The Encyclical Crisis: Contradiction Can and Must Be a Service to the Pope" in *Commonweal* (September 6, 1968, pp. 588-594)....

Did you have contacts with bishops after your statement?

Indeed, unexpectedly many. I would like to mention only a few. Already very early I and several other theologians were invited to an intense discussion with significant representatives of the American bishops' conference. The discussion took place in a truly fraternal atmosphere. I also met with key figures of the Canadian episcopacy.

In the beginning of September I returned from North America to Rome. I had already long since accepted invitations from the Sicilian and Sardinian bishops. After the open public statement of my opinion I wrote to the inviting bishops that I presumed that under these circumstances my coming would probably be inopportune. The answer was: "On the contrary. We wish to hear what you have to say to the pastoral situation after *Humanae vitae*." The two-week-long course on the two islands took place in the best atmosphere and with many listeners—something that I certainly had not dared to dream.

BERNARD HÄRING

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THE MOTHER OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION

IN MEMORIAM: CHRISTIANE BRUSSELMANS

JAMES PARKER

When I first met Christiane Brusselmans in 1974, I was a graduate student in Louvain. It was after an evening liturgy, and I was standing alone outside the chapel of the American College. She excused herself from a circle of friends to greet me. Where was I from? From Portland, Oregon? She expressed mock terror and then told me a story.

A few years earlier it happened that she was addressing a religious congress in Portland on the historical, psychological, and canonical reasons that children should not be required to make first confession before initiation into Eucharist. Each point had won thunderous applause. Puzzled by the overwhelming response, Christiane asked organizers what she had done. They explained that just a few minutes before her arrival the archbishop had inveighed against the notion that children could receive first Communion before confessing their sins.

Her story dissolving into infectious laughter, Christiane insisted that I join her for supper. The memory of our meeting and our meal came back to me in the sadness of learning this past November that Christiane had taken her life, succumbing to the manic depression that had dogged three generations of her family and afflicted her throughout her life. That evening in Louvain, she had found me on the edge of things, a little like Zaccheus. During our supper, she had filled my head and heart with dreams of church renewal through children's initiation and a catechumenate and rites for the initiation of adults. During the next seventeen years, I watched her teaching the church the meaning of hospitality, giving people around the world the same vision and hope. It is hard for me to think of a single individual who has had a wider and more profound influence on post-Vatican II church renewal than Christiane Brusselmans.

Stories of Christiane's childhood, which became a part of her lecture repertoire, bring the Trapp family to mind. One of eight children in a family that was the heart of a small village outside Louvain, she grew up in a home that had been commandeered by the Nazis for their Belgian headquarters. She breathed in the air of danger and intrigue as older siblings came and went from resistance activities. From parents who entertained the younger and more frightened children with stories and songs, Christiane learned the arts of storytelling and music that she would later discover are essential to good catechesis.

As a young woman, Christiane went through a crisis of faith. Her father, recognizing the crisis as more than the lapse from Mass attendance customary for students, suggested she attend a course being offered by an exciting young professor, the Reverend Edward Schillebeeckx. After hearing his lectures on the Eucharist, Christiane enrolled as a religious studies major at Louvain. There she came under the influence of a host of other theologians who, without knowing it, were preparing for Vatican II.

Meanwhile, brothers and sisters were establishing families, and Christiane was dismayed as nephews and nieces received perfunctory religious instruction and approached sacraments as social formalities. She realized that if she were ever to do something about that problem, she would have to continue her studies in liturgy and catechesis. She headed off to L'Institut Catholique in Paris, where her instructors convinced her that she had to experience the church's ancient method of initiating adults in order to know what to do with children. She immersed herself in one of the most exciting experiments of the pre-Vatican II liturgical movement—the Paris catechumenate.

Christiane hoped to return to Louvain to do doctoral studies on the ways in which the early church had drawn children into sacramental experience, but university officials, puzzled by the

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notion of a woman theologian, refused her entry. She turned to The Catholic University of America, where she was allowed to do her doctorate under the direction of the Reverend Gerard Sloyan. Her degree in hand, she taught for a short while at Fordham, and then was accepted back at Louvain as an associate professor of theology. There she influenced a generation of Americans—seminarians, priests, sisters, and, especially during the '70s, laity—for whom Brusselmans was part of the lure of studying theology at Louvain.

It wasn't in the Louvain classroom, however, that Christiane became so widely known and loved. Her real platform was at workshops and congresses around the world. These ventures began in the '60s after she was invited by her brothers and sisters to provide meaningful sacramental experiences for their children. "Tantiane," as the nephews and nieces called their *tante* (aunt) Christiane, set to work developing a catechumenate for children. The ingredients were biblical catechesis, family involvement at the dinner table, communities of families celebrating simple liturgies made joyful by banners and music (Christiane was a superb cantor), and, most important, time. For the duration of a year, she gathered the families for celebrations that unwrapped, one after another, the treasures of the Eucharist.

From this and successive experiences with forty-three nephews and nieces came workshops around the world on the manner of bringing children to the table of the Lord. Christiane took her process of initiating children to rural congregations in Belgium and Africa, and to urban families in New Zealand and New York's Spanish Harlem.

One afternoon, years after our first meeting, Christiane accompanied me to the parish church in the village of Tourinnes La-Grosse. I was delighted to discover a splendid eleventh-century church that was home to an active and enthusiastic congregation. It hadn't always been this way. Tourinnes La-Grosse was an early industrial site whose nineteenth-century citizens had ceased practicing their historical religion. Like many French and Italian towns after World War II, it had been run by the Communist party. The party's leaders had no Don Camillo to challenge them; instead, a succession of alcoholic pastors fueled the villagers' anticlericalism. By the late '60s, when Christiane was invited to help prepare a child of a friend in Tourinnes La-Grosse for Eucharist, only a small congregation, mostly widows, attended Sunday Mass. It was a point of honor for working-class families to never cross the threshold of the church, which had fallen into disrepair.

Christiane began with the one child—sent to the church rather than accompanied by her parents, who feared being ostracized for their faith. By the end of a year the initiation group included a dozen children, all of them accompanied by parents. Christiane had succeeded in getting the ordinary to appoint a sympathetic pastor, and she had recruited local artisans to restore the church building. Soon she was filling the church with the melodies of the Gelineau psalms. People began returning to Sunday Mass. Under her leadership they inaugurated a yearly festival of the arts that still draws crowds of tourists to the village. The restored church of St. Martin, a gem of Romanesque architecture, stands as a symbol of a community reborn.

What started with children became a vision of renewal for the whole church. In 1972, a curial congregation charged with implementing the liturgical mandates of Vatican II published a provisional text of the Rites of Christian Initiation of Adults. Few took note. One who did was Christiane. From her experiences in the Paris catechumenate, she knew that the rites were more than a liturgical antique or a fancier way of welcoming converts than the customary practice of quizzing them on the catechism and baptising them privately. The rites involved revolutionary notions of conversion, catechesis, church, liturgy, and sacraments.

Christiane's opportunity came when an undergraduate at Harvard, where she was lecturing at the time, asked Christiane to help her enter the church. Christiane explained to her the stages of catechesis and liturgy outlined in the Rites, and quickly gathered friends to form a catechetical team to accompany the young woman on her journey. Three years later, when Jane Redmont was baptised, confirmed, and given the Eucharist during the Easter Vigil, the catechumenate had been restored. It was now a question of how to replicate the Harvard experience in parishes around the country.

That challenge would daunt all but a Christiane. In 1978 she called catechetical and liturgical experts to Senanque, a monastery in southern France, for a symposium on restoring the rites of Christian initiation as the centerpiece of pastoral strategy in the ordinary Catholic parish. From Senanque came workshops around the world and, in the U.S., the North American Forum, which has aided parishes in almost every diocese to implement what Christiane liked to call the best-kept secret of Vatican II.

Christiane suspected that there was a strategy here. People in small communities, formed by reflection on the Word of God, could be church in the most basic sense of the word: gatherings for celebration and service. They could take inventory of one another's needs and plan their service to the neighborhoods and society in which they found themselves. They could help solve the problem of priestlessness, already a reality of church life in Europe and fast becoming a crisis in North America. They could renew the church from the ground up.

Christiane also suspected that the catechumenal renewal had parallels in the success stories coming out of Christian base communities in Latin America and the missionary churches of Africa. So Christiane, whom friends teased for being "La Popessa," did what many would have wanted the pope to do: she called an international symposium on "The Future of the Local Church."

Of all her projects, this symposium, held in Bruges in 1985, is the only one yet to bear fruit. Some future pope, however, may survey thousands of priestless communities nourished by an array of ministers and gratefully judge this gathering the most important. Some future historian, trying to account for the twenty-first-century appearance of a church in which people choose their pastors from among men and women who have proven records in service, may well devote a chapter of his or her book to the event in Bruges.

In her last years, Christiane returned to the children. She wanted them to take part in a Liturgy of the Word on their level. She

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began translating the Lectionary into simple but elegant language, composing lively responsorial psalms that children whistle all week long, and designing exquisite illustrations for them to take home to the family table.

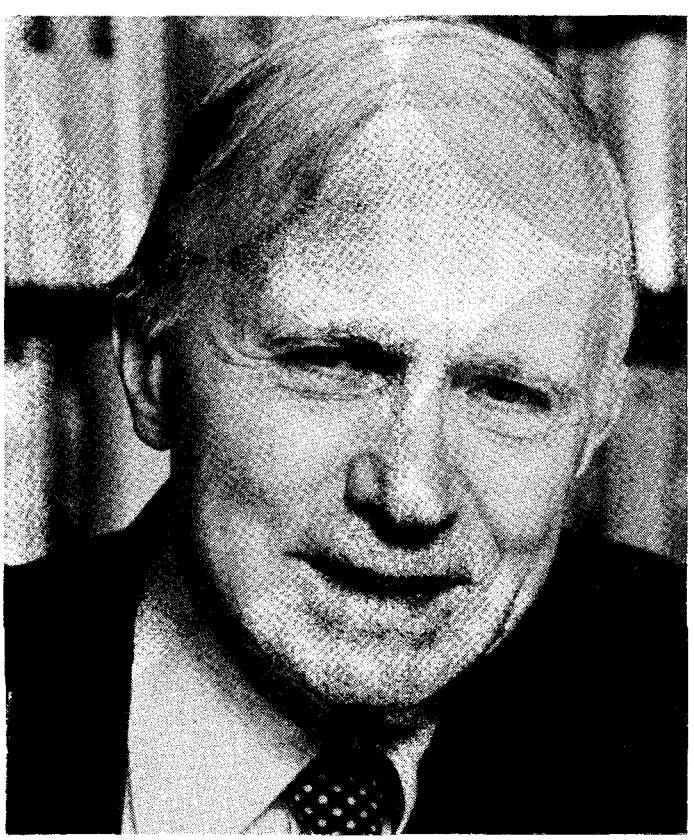
In all of Christiane's great accomplishments—devising a children's catechumenate for the Eucharist, restoring the process of initiating adults into the church, reviving the many ministries of the local church, creating a Liturgy of the Word for children—she taught us how to retrieve the Catholic past and make it serve the needs of twentieth-century Christians. She offered what neither right nor left wing of the post-Vatican II church could offer: not old traditions or new inventions, but the Catholic tradition.

It was no wonder, then, that she was as beloved among bishops as she was among children and their parents. She honored them for embodying the tradition. Even when bishops disagreed with her about interpreting that tradition, as did the archbishop of Portland on the question of first confession, it was hard for them not to go along with her. The combination of her theological acumen, childlike faith, and constant gracefulness would carry the day.

Most of the people in New Mexico or New Zealand, Spanish Harlem or suburban Los Gatos, who met Christiane Brusselmans never saw the dark side of the energy and enthusiasm that they witnessed at her presentations. At as many as a dozen workshops each year on the rites of initiation, during which participants celebrated the liturgies of the Easter Vigil, she entered into each celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus as if it were the first and only one of her life. What participants didn't suspect is that it was just as often Good Friday for Christiane. The few friends who could prevail on her to stay in their homes would sometimes see a mood change that made them wonder; it had to be caused by more than jet lag and airport waits. We didn't comprehend how painful were her depressions.

One of those friends, the Reverend Ron Rolheiser, writes that Christiane "struggled a lot, a victim of her own extraordinary sensitivity and giftedness. There were medical issues which made her manner of dying less surprising. Like many others who have to suffer the stigma of this kind of death, she was taken out of this world against her will.... Hopefully no one will ... let the manner of her death reflect in any way upon the quality of her person or upon the importance of her contribution."

A favorite story of Christiane's for conveying the meaning and love of Eucharist will be in the minds of all her friends from now on as they approach to receive their Lord in Communion. The story came from her children's catechumenate in Spanish Harlem. Christiane was about to leave the parish. One girl, whom years of family abuse had hardened in sullen resistance to everything Christiane said and did, called her aside. She held out a small piece of notebook paper. "Here, write your name." Christiane carefully formed each letter of her name. The girl snatched the paper and crumpled it quickly into a small ball. Before the horrified Christiane could intervene, the girl put it into her mouth and swallowed. "Now," she announced, "even if you go away, you'll never leave me. You'll always be inside me." □



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TWO STORIES FROM THE WEST BANK

AFTER THE GULF WAR

PATRICK WHITE

The effects of the Gulf War have been devastating for many people, but for the Palestinians the tragedy is a continuous one. Of the 400,000 Palestinians in Kuwait at the time of the Iraqi invasion in August 1990, 350,000 were Jordanian citizens. By July 15, 1991, 270,000 of them had fled to Jordan, marking yet another exodus of the Palestinian people. This flood of refugees would be comparable to 20 million Americans returning to the United States when the country was in a deep recession, suffering a loss of 5 percent of its GNP and with 20 percent unemployment.

The situation is hardly better on the West Bank where other Palestinian refugees from Kuwait now find themselves. Two stories that I have recently heard will give some sense of the capricious and very difficult situations in which people find themselves.

Mrs. Suad Araj and her husband George were both university professors in Kuwait; he in the medical school, she in law. They had worked hard to build their lives and those of their three children, and were dedicated to their work, the university, and society in Kuwait. Their unexpected exile was not the first for either of them. Both of their families had fled Jerusalem in 1948: hers went to Beit Sahour and his to Beit Jala on the West Bank.

As Christian Palestinians, they were educated in schools near Bethlehem before 1967 and went on to Bir Zeit University near Ramallah. From there they went to the American University of Beirut where George Araj earned a master's degree in medical parasitology. He later earned his doctorate in medical microbiology and did postdoctoral clinical microbiology in the United States.

Because of the war in Lebanon, they left for the U.S. in 1977. Dr. Araj held a series of posts at medical centers in Toledo, Richmond, and Houston. They both continued their studies; Mrs. Araj completed her master's degree. Family pressure and their own attachments persuaded them to return to the Middle East. But where to? They decided on Kuwait, where Dr. Araj had been offered a post at the medical school.

Suad Araj: "Coming back from the U.S., we found Kuwait a completely different society. Different, too, from our society in Beit Jala and Beit Sahour. There were between 350,000 and 400,000 Palestinians, the majority from the West Bank and Gaza. In Kuwait, Christians were a minority. Yet we were lucky: we had very good jobs, colleagues, and friends."

Palestinians had been in Kuwait since their diaspora in 1948 and had made major contributions in building the infrastructure of the country. Much of the money they earned was sent back to their families on the West Bank or Gaza. The Kuwaitis were actually a minority in their own society for they represented only 30 percent of the population while the Palestinians and other Arab nationals made up more than 50 percent.

The Arajs, now with three children, lived for nine years in Kuwait. Then came the summer of 1990.

Suad Araj: "The invasion of Saddam Hussein came as a surprise in every way. In fact, July 17 is Revolution Day in Iraq. I remember very well, for my husband was away at a conference and lecture tour in Canada. I followed the newspapers very carefully. On the 17th there were at least six pages about Saddam; a Kuwaiti newspaper with pictures of Saddam, a very fine issue in praise of him."

She went on to note that four days later the Kuwaiti press started attacking Saddam. An Indian ophthalmologist who lived next door came to ask her about these attacks. Saud reassured her that nothing would happen since the papers had changed opinions like this before. Shortly after this her husband returned from Canada and insisted they go on a vacation to relax. She was reluctant but agreed. Kuwaiti military headquarters were nearby and there was no sign of increased activity the evening before they left, just three days before the Iraqi invasion. Everything looked normal.

They almost missed what proved to be the last plane from Kuwait to Cyprus. They were late partly because of her reluctance and because Dr. Araj interfered with the packing. "I'd pack something, he would take it out. And he'd say: 'Dresses for the beach? No! no! You don't need dresses for the beach.'" She laughed but continued: "He wanted to do the same for our little daughter. She need not take some new clothes just given her as a present." But the little girl insisted and "she packed the most!"

Suad Araj: "I left all my jewelry at home. I left everything, even my notebook with addresses and telephone numbers that I usually take with me.

"On July 31 we arrived in Limassol, Cyprus. We unpacked in our rented apartment and took a stroll on the beach. On August

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1 my husband told the renting office that he would pay the rent in advance the following morning."

At seven the next morning there was an impatient ringing of the doorbell. When Suad went to the door, to her surprise and annoyance, there was a woman from the renting office wanting them to come and pay the rent immediately. Understandably Suad was furious; they were not going to run away. The woman from the office was surprised and asked whether they hadn't heard the news about the invasion.

Suad's first thought was that this meant clashes at the border, but the woman reported that Kuwait City and the Amir Palace were occupied. When her husband went down to the office she could tell that something serious had happened.

Suad Araj: "They wouldn't accept Kuwaiti currency. They called two banks. They would not accept it either." Finally one bank agreed and they were able to pay the rent. There were many Arabs, including Palestinians and Kuwaitis, who could not change their Kuwaiti currency and were out on the streets. No one would accept credit cards from Kuwait and the airlines stopped functioning, so many people were stranded.

"We were stunned. It was a real shock, a shock, just to wake up with virtually nothing: no money, no clothes, no documents, nothing at all. We had worked so hard for so many years and we ended up with nothing. A lot of people had heart attacks. I was crying and crying. I did not want the children to know what had happened. We did not tell them that we had no money. What could we do? We did not have telephone numbers, addresses, bank account numbers. Nothing, nothing, nothing at all!"

Dr. Araj's father is the mayor of Beit Jala on the West Bank. He pleaded with the Israeli military governor to check the data in their computer so that the family could return to the West Bank. All Palestinians are obliged to have permits to return, and only those that were resident after 1967 are eligible. The family had permits but these were in Kuwait. Fortunately they were allowed back. The great majority of Palestinians were not because they had left the West Bank before 1967, or had not returned at the required intervals, or had lost their permits. Many of the Palestinians caught in Kuwait had nowhere to go, not to Jordan or Egypt, Syria, the West Bank, or Gaza.

Suad Araj: "Fortunately we had a family to come back to in Beit Jala, but it was very difficult. We had to depend on others, we had to find work for ourselves and schools for the children. We weren't able to contact anybody we knew in Kuwait, not even my boss. I don't know what happened to him. Later the dean of the medical school in Kuwait did get in touch with my husband. He was very helpful and considerate but could not bring my husband back to his work because of Kuwait government policy toward Palestinians."

The latest, sad chapter in the Arajs' story is this: George Araj was offered a visiting professorship at the Medical College of Virginia. They went to Jerusalem to obtain a visa from the U.S. Consulate. At first they were very well received, the vice-consul was most gracious. Examining their documents, he saw no problem in their returning to the U.S. Since Suad had a job, she would be staying on the West Bank with the children. Again the vice-consul was extremely helpful and said he would be prepared

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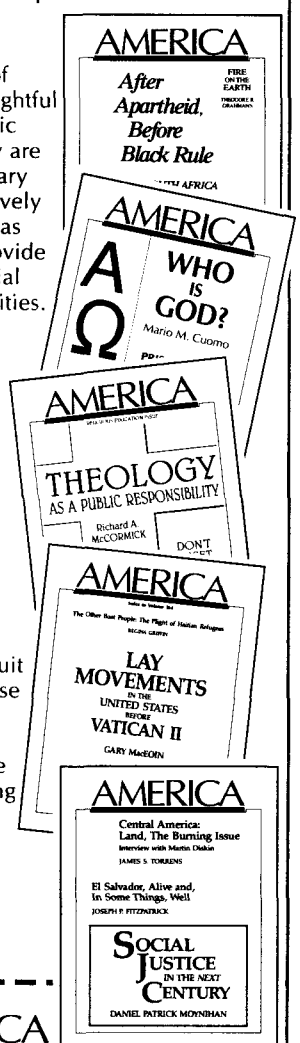

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to make arrangements whenever she was ready to follow her husband. At this stage he had approved and signed the forms. Then the consul's assistant looked at their passports and asked from where they had come. George answered Kuwait. The attitude suddenly changed. The vice-consul could not issue a visa; he scribbled over his approval and signature. He also said that the consulate would have to cancel the existing five-year multiple entry visas that had been issued before the invasion. The Arajs were stunned. When the Americans were asked about the change, they answered that the Araj family did not have strong ties with the West Bank because they had been working in Kuwait.

The plight of the Araj family is just one example of the unfortunate situation of many thousands of Palestinians who became inadvertent victims of the invasion and war. Many of those who escaped from Kuwait after the invasion were exposed to a multitude of painful events on their journeys.

One young Palestinian, Hani Mourat, left Kuwait by bus three weeks after the invasion, traveling with his sister, three Palestinian friends, and nearly forty Indian and Filipino passengers. Hani is a computer expert; his sister worked for British Airways; many of the group on the bus were friends or worked for the same firm. The Jordanian bus driver charged $380 for the ride to Amman, far higher than the cost of the trip by air. When they reached the border between Iraq and Jordan, the driver tried to force them off the bus, breaking his agreement to take them to Amman. The driver tried to abandon them in the middle of the desert in a makeshift refugee camp where thousands were stranded without food or water. Some of the refugees shouted to the passengers warning them not to get down from the bus.

Frantic negotiations started with Jordanian border officials to allow the bus to continue to Amman. The Palestinians argued that they had relatives and accommodation in Amman. Hani's sister said she had guarantees from British Airways to fly out the people on the bus within twenty-four hours of their arrival in Amman. The Jordanian officials agreed to let the Palestinians through, but not the Indians and Filipinos. The Palestinians would not leave unless all of the passengers went with them.

At that point, their bus driver tried again to get them off the bus so that he could return to Kuwait and make another lucrative journey: He drove around the desert, facing the bus into the sun in order to expose the passengers to the full impact of the afternoon rays. This continued for four hours. Red dust covered everything and the heat was intolerable, especially for several mothers with their babies.

It began to get dark. Hani said they were almost ready to give up. Then he took down his guitar and someone said, "Let's sings songs of praise!" It was extraordinary, for everyone on the bus started singing. The passengers from different religious denominations sang and prayed that God would deliver them. As they sang, one of the Indians started collecting food and drink to give to the refugees outside in the insufferable heat. Everybody contributed though Hani wondered if it wasn't a rash thing to do, since they might be there for several days themselves.

Five minutes later, after the passengers had given their food away, Jordanian officials arrived to say that the entire bus load had received clearance to enter Jordan. Hani and his friend believe something miraculous occurred.

Suad Araj ended our conversation by saying: "You know we have been living this problem from the time we were born. I was born in 1948 and since then we have had no peace of mind at all. When you are living here, you always have a problem."

For the Palestinians there is no peace of mind, no justice; the Kuwaiti crisis has subsided but the suffering for Palestinians continues, a saga so far without end.

L.E. McCullough

Buddy Lee Perriman Reflects on the Persian Gulf Crisis, Day 15

Some redheaded woman from Kentucky and her two
kids and black dog
Drove up in a brand new jap twodoor
And moved into the old yellow woodframe cross the
alley

That was Tuesday then Zettie's stepson Herschell got
pissdrunk
And plowed his damn Harley into a fencepost on 52
the day after

I had to hock that gook k-bar I got at Vung Tau to raise
his bail
When I come back I seen Riley Frazier the roofer got
laid off
Come out of Ike's Recovery Room headed down the
unemployment office

Then this morning one of them young kids from cross
the way come over
A little skinny boy with peanut butter and jelly stains
on his chin
Dirty blue jeans tore out at both knees and his hair not
washed proper you could tell

Mister, he says, they got a new war on TV and my
momma
She gonna buy me and my sister Goddam Saddam t-
shirts and a scud video game
Soon as our ADC check come in

Hey mister, he says
Was you born in that wheelchair?

Son, I says, set down on that box of empties right there
and I'll tell you a story
About three bears lived in a jungle
Mama-san, Papa-san, and Baby-san....

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FANTASIES & GIMMICKS

'PROSPERO' & 'HOOK'

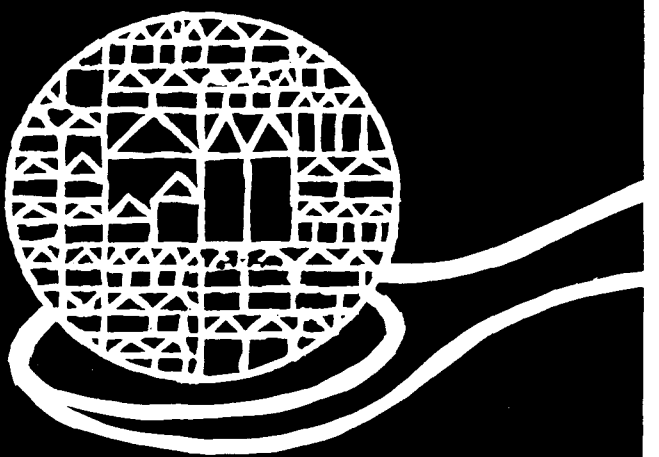
Peter Greenaway, a self-preening postmodernist who couldn't articulate the simplest story to save his life, has made an adaptation of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* called *Prospero's Books*. Wisely coasting on his small but undeniable flair for Felliniesque imagery and, even more wisely, hiring Sir John Gielgud to play Prospero, Greenaway has managed to give us a *Tempest* that renders about one-tenth of the magic of this great fantasy. Considering what atrocities Greenaway has flung onto screens (the loathsome *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife, and Her Lover*, the mincingly sadistic and finally incoherent *The Draughtsman's Contract*), we should be grateful for even this small measure.

Greenaway, of course, undermines the story with numerous tricks, narrative and visual, none of which serve to shed light on the play. The most egregious one posits Prospero as planning his revenge on paper in the form of a verse play that just happens to be called *The Tempest*. This makes Prospero a stand-in for Shakespeare and that's okay by me since Prospero is considered by many critics to be the Bard's most substantially autobiographical portrait. But this Prospero-Shakespeare reads his play-in-progress on the soundtrack with Gielgud speaking the lines of all the characters, not just Prospero's, while various actors and dancers dumbshow their roles on camera. Gielgud as Prospero—si! Gielgud as Miranda—no! Not even vocally! And since the mime is boringly, confusingly choreographed (with many actors masked so that we can't even see their lips move), and since Sir John only slightly alters his familiar tenor cum tremolo voice to suit the other roles, even moviegoers fairly familiar with the text will have trouble distinguishing who is saying what to whom.

Several of Greenaway's images are memorable not as dramatic propulsions of the story (as Olivier's and Kenneth Branagh's are for their versions of *Henry V*) but as static illustrations of the text. As any good illustration in a book does, Greenaway's better images freeze the characters and plot in midflight and let you savor that moment of transfixion. Thus, Greenaway suspends a colloquy between Ariel and Prospero to give us a flashback in which we see what Ariel looked like when the spirit was literally treed by Caliban's witch-mama Sycorax. The picture is startling, horrible, and comic all at once. Embedded in bark, moss grows out of Ariel's mouth. This sprite, born to be as quick as thought and as impalpable as light, is rotting away within nature.

Other images also work nicely. Ferdinand, sorely tested by Prospero with manual labor, collapses and is comforted by Miranda on a dimly lit staircase that is both forbidding and yet somehow romantic, and which perfectly conveys both present distress and future bliss. And all the scenes that Shakespeare

Say ahhhhhhhhh.



A spoonful of eschatology helps the medicine go down, or so Mary Poppins said. Or words to that effect.

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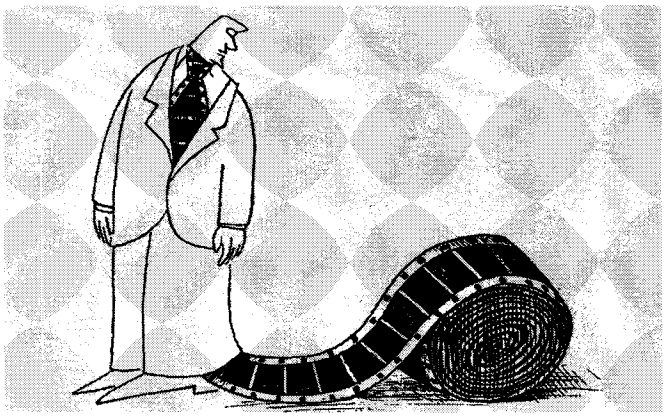
himself intended as sheer spectacle and music—the betrothal celebration, the harpy descending upon the usurpers' dinner—Greenaway mounts skillfully, if excessively, with his celebrated lateral tracking shots, rock-ized Renaissance music, and an abundance of nude bodies painted gold, writhing beside other figures clothed in *outré* variations on Jacobean garb. In other words, Greenaway the image maestro gets going only when Shakespeare the word maestro pauses.

Or when John Gielgud is serving the word maestro. As I have said, Gielgud has too much to read on the soundtrack, but when he is on camera as Prospero, one cannot get too much of him. Greenaway had the good sense to cut out the pyrotechnics during Prospero's oratorio-like monologues and keep the camera trained on his great star's face, which seems so irradiated by the words spoken that it shines with a proud, humorous mastery. The famous voice hasn't been thickened or clouded by age (though Gielgud is eighty-six), and its owner's command of legato seems to lodge Shakespeare's words in our brains with the speed and happy insidiousness of mental telepathy. Gielgud's Prospero is the one and only Prospero of our age, and we must feel gratitude to Greenaway for preserving some pieces of it.

That's not the only gratitude that's in order. In this *Tempest*, an unkillable poet and a stalwart theater knight have bailed out Peter Greenaway's very shallow and very leaky little craft.

Sir James Barrie conceived of the Never Land as a truly wondrous place where British children of the Edwardian era could remain children, where irresponsibility and spontaneity could be preserved and not perish in the service of king and country or business and family, and where the only empire to be fought for was a "nicely crammed" island with lagoons and tree houses and pirates and Indians. But in *Hook*, Steven Spielberg's sequel to *Peter Pan*, the children are Americanized and are precociously hip as most American kids are. One can picture these Lost Boys back in the States: skateboarding, plugging away at video games, cruising shopping malls. But there are no video games in the Never Land, no shopping malls, and though there are a few skateboards, it's not as much fun riding one through forests as it is to hurtle through urban crowds. So, since these American kids on Spielberg's island aren't escaping Latin conjugations and canings in strict public schools but are rather being deprived of MTV, Walkman headphones, and pizza pie, they seem as underprivileged as children stuck in a summer camp long after the summer has ended. They are Lost Boys, indeed, dependent upon each other for entertainment and waiting for Peter Pan to return.

For it is the conceit of this film that Peter Pan, during one of his periodic visits to the aging Wendy, finally fell in love with Wendy's granddaughter, forsook his eternal youth, married, bred, and became a corporate raiding lawyer. Only after Captain Hook kidnaps his two children does this middle-aged Pan revert to his swashbuckling self and, even then, it's primarily to win back the admiration of his disaffected son and prove that he's not a workaholic zombie. (It seems Dad Pan has been missing too many Little League games.)



The scenes that set up this premise in the first twenty minutes are the best in the movie. They fill us with the happiness children feel on Christmas Eve: all joy is impending, all expectation delicious. Spielberg teases us with our memories of the book, the plays, and the movies. The adult Pan is afraid of flying, even on airplanes. The ninety-year-old Wendy, upon learning of her former playmate's Wall Street aggressiveness, tartly observes, "Why, Peter, you've become a pirate." (And what an inflection the grand Maggie Smith brings to that line!) The Darling house in which Wendy still lives really looks like a repository of wonderful memories, and Caroline Goodall as Peter's wife really seems to carry the Wendy genes. The London that Spielberg has reconstructed looks as if it will revert to the Edwardian era at any moment, and the sky over it positively begs for flying children.

Then Peter flies to the Never Land and...well, the movie doesn't exactly crash but it certainly stalls, gets going again, stalls again, flips over, rises rapidly in altitude, sinks sickeningly, and so on.

The sets—pirate ship, island, lagoon—are enormous but much of the action on them is stale and tinny, and the gags performed on them are worthy of only a lesser installment of the old "Carol Burnett Show." The various fights only rehash and diminish the stunts from an Indiana Jones adventure and the special effects wanly recall *E.T.*'s. The endurance of Barrie's play and novel, despite their self-caressing twee-ness, lies precisely in Barrie's exuberant inventions (Hook's paranoia about the crocodile, the crock's ingested clock, Mr. Darling's penitential consignment of himself to the kennel) and in the mythic resonance of the story. Spielberg proves incapable of adding to these inventions, much less outdoing them. He can only reminisce and parody. Hook and Smee still have their duets of hate/love but the exchanges lack the original's strangely masochistic humor (despite the good efforts of Dustin Hoffman and Bob Hoskins). Tinker Bell still hovers about but Spielberg feels obliged to hold his camera on Julia Roberts's face long enough for her to register her usual self-adoring smiles. The crocodile has been stuffed but still manages to swallow Hook. Spielberg and his writers add some maudlin stuff about fatherhood and maturity ("to *live* will be a terribly big adventure"), but there is nothing fresh in the reversals and elaborations, no indication that Spielberg absolutely had to make this movie. Even Robin Williams's occasionally funny Pan is

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mostly a rehash of some of his past performances.

In the middle of *Hook* there is a brief flashback to Pan's babyhood and the beginning of his magical career. This is a raptly beautiful episode, reminiscent of Arthur Rackham's drawings but not at all static in execution. Its unforced magic made me feel that, for once, Spielberg should have been content with the role of adaptor rather than inventor, and that he could have made a super version of the original *Peter Pan* instead of this half-baked sequel.

Almost nothing in *Hook* bores because Spielberg keeps throwing stuff at us, but almost nothing he throws is truly engrossing. This movie was obviously very carefully planned, but I don't think it was envisioned. RICHARD ALLEVA

STAGE

TOUGH LOVE, FALSE LOVE

'MARVIN'S ROOM' & 'HUMAN REMAINS'

At the end of Scott McPherson's *Marvin's Room*, the protagonist, whose leukemia is apparently incurable, continues to bustle about caring for her bed-ridden, brain-damaged father; she and her impossible sister seem to have reconciled their irreconcilable differences; her troubled nephew has returned to the family; and most of the group have assembled offstage in the batty aunt's room (she has dressed elegantly for the occasion) with snacks to witness a marriage in the aunt's favorite soap opera. At the end of Brad Fraser's *Unidentified Human Remains and the True Nature of Love*, three of the principals—the gay protagonist, his almost straight female friend and roommate, and the young man who loves him but is still uncertain about his sexual orientation—clutch one another, declaring the possibility of love against most of the evidence of the play itself. There is, then, a certain thematic similarity between *Marvin's Room*, which is at the Playwrights Horizons, and *Human Remains*, which recently finished an off-Broadway run of several months, the first declaring for life in the midst of death, the second for love in a society of disconnection. Whatever their similarities, they are very different plays.

Marvin's Room comes to New York from Chicago and Hartford, bringing with it several performers from the earlier productions, most notably Laura Esterman as Bessie, the play's chief dying life-figure; in pointing out Esterman, I do not want to disparage the rest of the cast in a fine production, but she is remarkable as she shifts from her all-elbows, all-knees comic style to a tough seriousness that escapes the sentimentality which could easily smother this kind of material. The aunt's soap opera appears at first to be no more than a recurring humorous point, but it is central to the work. As my description in the paragraph above indicates, the catastrophe overload in *Marvin's Room* suggests the convoluted plots of soap opera, and it may be that at some point in the creation of the work—at an early stage of the writing perhaps or only in the back of the playwright's mind—McPherson intended a parody of soap opera. That might explain why the play is so funny, despite its subject matter, and why the medical scenes seem closer to the old doctor routine in burlesque than to *General Hospital*. Even if the play began as a guying of soap opera, it went quickly beyond that satiric commonplace. The laughter remains and becomes part of the life-affirming quality of the play, but McPherson has moved on to a consideration of the embrace or the avoidance of caring, the conflict between Bessie and Lee, her abrasive sister, who finally sees that Bessie has made a positive life out of what Lee first believes is a sacrifice of self. In a *New York Times* interview (November 10, 1991), McPherson described the play as about "love and the power of giving yourself to someone else," and indicated that it both is and is not an AIDS play. "Of course, a play's a play, and AIDS is not a metaphor. It's a disease, and all diseases are real." The playwright is suffering from that disease, but he has found a metaphor on which to end his play. The titular room fills the back of the stage, and through the wall we can see in silhouette Marvin in bed and Bessie sitting beside him; a light—a flashing mirror which is one of the few things to which Marvin reacts—plays around the room. Now *there's* a point of light for you.

Unidentified Human Remains, which came to New York from Canada and Chicago, might be seen as a kind of grotesque comedy, one that begins not in soap opera but in sex-and-slash journalism. One of the characters, a whore decked out in late-Storeyville, early-*Paris Is Burning* working clothes, punctuates the action by reading juicy tabloid tidbits of erotic nastiness. Brad Fraser provided in the program a thumbnail sketch of his native Edmonton (the play's setting) as a "plain sister" among Canadian cities, at once boring, preposterous, and violent, and he may have intended his play as a true picture of the dark underbelly of the city where loneliness, indifference, and cruelty flourish. The play is a sexual mélange in which David, who loves straight Bernie, chooses to cruise as a way of avoiding commitment of any kind, and Candy, his roommate, tries to find a stable attachment, at one point sampling a lesbian possibility. While all the combinations form and re-form, there is an offstage serial killer stalking the city, and anyone who has ever seen a movie or a play will know immediately that it is Bernie, even though it takes the other characters a long time to find out or to admit this obvious fact. The run of the play may have had less to do with whatever serious point it wanted to make—"about the sexual desperation of people trying to love and create relationships in the world we live in now," said director Derek Goldby platitudinously in the *Chicago Tribune* (February 17, 1991)—than to the fact that all the characters managed to remove their clothes on occasion. There is apparently still a strong titillation factor in naked pseudo-couplings on stage.

I found the fully clothed *Marvin's Room* more provocative. *Note:* In a fit of abstraction or senility I identified Kevin Heelan as a black playwright in my review of *Distant Fires* (*Commonweal*, December 20, 1991). He isn't. Race aside, he is simply a talented playwright. GERALD WEALES

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When modernity sows the seeds

LUKE TIMOTHY JOHNSON

These two books have much in common. Each is written in a self-consciously personal and confessional mode by a man of a certain age who views himself as liberal in "vision" (to borrow from Meagher's subtitle), and who after a long attachment to Christianity confesses an inability to affirm its traditional creedal structure. To put it bluntly, the authors no longer quite believe what Christianity claims. Rather than simply abandon the religion, they have written books explaining their difficulties and suggesting ways in which the religion could improve itself if only it would adopt perspectives closer to their own.

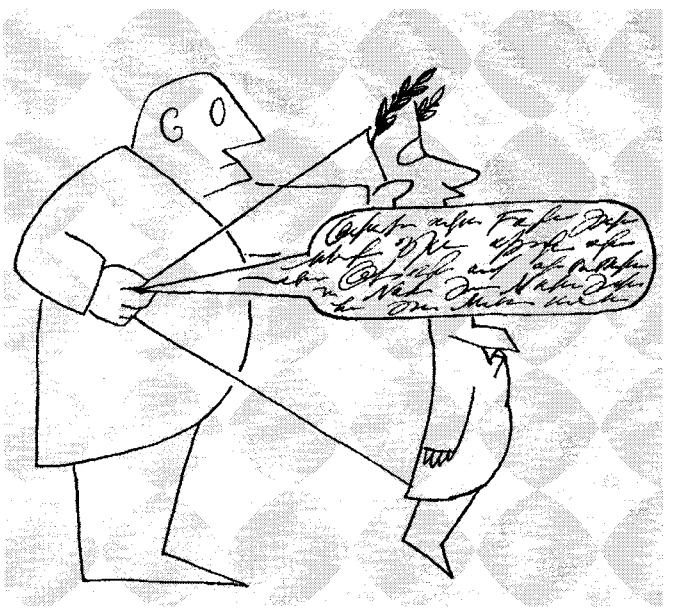
With the myopia common among those whose major contacts with Christianity are through theologians and other academic religionists, they do not perceive the recent remarkable recrudescence of orthodox Christianity as anything more than a mulish resistance to the inevitable collapse of traditional religion under the pressures of modernity, a survival of what Meagher calls "smalltown religion." The people they talk to and read resemble them in their discontent with the inherited tradition and discomfort at the ways in which less well-read people seem actually to believe and live by the myths which, by all rights, should long ago have disappeared. Their books are certainly not written for such undereducated believers; the intended readership is rather assumed already to share the sensibilities of the authors.

John Bowden, an Anglican, is an important British theologian and publisher (SCM Press), and shows himself to be a surveyor as well as purveyor of many books; he tends to report on "tendencies" in theology to which he modestly subscribes. His tone is careful and circumspect, even worried; he is only reporting, after all, and "questioning." And in fact, much of what he says has been said before; not a little of the book's clumsiness comes from the stringing together of authorities from the publishing list: in particular, readers of *Honest to God* and *The Myth of God Incarnate* will find the perspectives familiar, enriched mainly by Bowden's pious affirmation of religious ecumenism and cultural pluralism. Although Bowden considers much of Christianity to be incredible, for example, he apparently finds Judaism to be in great shape, as well as being a lot more humorous. And apart from some cautionary words concerning the adequacy of liberation theology, there is little else in the stew of modernity to which he takes exception. He considers our society to be one that has "improved the potential quality of our lives out of all recognition" and in the process has taken on the authoritative statements of the churches and "proved them to be unsound."

Bowden's introduction gathers together a number of reminiscences and propositions that go to suggest (a) the book has more of a coherent argument than may at first appear, and (b) there are any number of intellectual and moral reasons why Christianity's credibility is in trouble, and (c) the critical knowledge long held by university people but inexplicably kept from people in the church is now being made available through the efforts of the author, though not without anguish.

Only much later does Bowden make clear the basis of his critique, or the benefits offered by it. The basis is an epistemological monism that assumes historical analysis to be the relativizer of all ultimate claims. The benefits are the liberalization of Christianity by making it more open to "those of different faiths" and by freeing us from "half-truths which have been used to dominate and control, to instill fear and endorse the acceptance of social injustice, inequality of the treatment of the sexes, and the perpetuation of institutions which have outlived their day; in short, half-truths which have tended illegitimately to postpone change."

Bowden's project of subjecting Christian claims to historical analysis in order to purge them of "half-truths," however, turns out to be more radical than it appears, for his notion of history



LUKE TIMOTHY JOHNSON *is professor of New Testament and Christian Origins at Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana. His most recent book is* Faith's Freedom: A Classic Spirituality for Contemporary Christians *(Fortress Press).*

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is positivistic in the extreme. When he surveys scholarship on the figure of Jesus, for example, he is not content with showing the difficulties of locating what is historical in the Gospels; he is out to ask how the "paramount symbol" of Christianity, the person of Jesus, "stands up to modern questioning," which is an inquiry of quite a different order, though Bowden does not appear to recognize that. Or perhaps he does, for he spends a major portion of the book trying to suggest that this "paramount symbol" is really what stands in the way of the changes he would like to see.

Having subjected the various possibilities for asserting the "Finality of Christ" to historical critical analysis and finding them wanting, Bowden gazes upon the wreck of traditional Christianity and finds it good, if somewhat belated. His solution to the loss of traditional Christian identity is to speed it up. What is required of those truly committed to the truth is an invigorating plunge into modernity. The only criteria for measuring the adequacy of any future form of Christianity cannot be doctrinal but only ethical—although on this as on so many points, Bowden shows himself to be amazingly imprecise as to what such ethical standards should be, beyond a fairly fuzzy humanism.

What does Bowden recommend to his reader? Openness to the future and to change. He insists that the future Christianity cannot have any "authoritarianism in matters of belief." Yet, his liberalism is not entirely formless, nor lacking in its own doctrinal bias. Throughout the book, Bowden shows special animosity toward the "utterly fantastic" cult of Mary, and states that when the brave new world of Christianity shaped by enlightened males and females arrives "it is hard to see how...it can allow the persons of either Jesus or Mary to continue to play some of the roles they at present have in Christianity." Did he really say "allow"? Is there after all an air of fascism in this "correct thinking" that may be at odds with a completely "open church"? Indeed, if we return to the paragraph immediately preceding the one calling for an end to authoritarianism in the name of openness and muddling through, Bowden states directly, "There are parts of the tradition which need to be *ruthlessly discarded or repudiated*" (italics added). Given the entire direction of Bowden's book, this would appear to include the parts of the tradition concerning Jesus.

John C. Meagher offers more mirthful reading. He is a theologian working in the context of the university (of Toronto). His book is less reportage and more a lively thinking through of the author's self-assigned problem of trying to shape a future of a religion to which he is emotionally attached but whose basis he can no longer take too seriously. Meagher's book has a number of stylistic irritants, including its oh-so-oblique narrative prologue and epilogue, its penchant for neologisms, its idiosyncratic and self-indulgent system of notation, and its incessant self-referentiality. On the other hand, his book is less pedestrian than Bowden's, contains some really fine individual patches of analysis, and at least engages—if it also often enrages—the reader.

Meagher begins his reflections with a distinction between belief and faith which is critical to the rest of his argument. In brief, he asserts the primacy of faith as an open, trusting, creative, imaginative personal response to reality over belief, which is always a partial and sometime distorting attempt to articulate that existential response in conceptual terms. The reader therefore expects—and finds—Meagher trying to develop a "vision of the future" of Christianity that relativizes the place of traditional Christian belief.

Books discussed in this essay

Jesus: The Unanswered Questions, *by John Bowden, Abingdon Press, 1989.*

The Truing of Christianity: Visions of Life and Thought for the Future, *by John C. Meagher, Doubleday, 1990.*

Meagher's perspective, however, is by no means as positivistic as Bowden's. In his second chapter, "Truth and Some Consequences," he discusses various ways in which "truth" can be understood, and on that basis develops a fourfold question for those within the Christian tradition: (a) Is Christianity true (in the sense that its claims are factual or internally consistent)? (b) Is one "truly Christian" (in the sense that one's life realizes Christian identity)? (c) Is one "Christian truly" (in the sense that one is sincerely what one claims, or "true to oneself" in those claims)? (d) Does Christianity "true" (in the sense that it renders human life more authentic and more fully human)?

The major portion of his argument is understandably taken up with the first and final questions: is Christianity "true" and "does it true?" These are obviously more accessible for analysis, and the answer to the questions concerning personal appropriation and validation depend on them: if Christianity fails to "be" or "make" true, then one adheres to it at risk of self-distortion. The second part of the book therefore takes up the question, "Are Christianities True?" This section most resembles Bowden's book, as Meagher also sets out to deconstruct the assumption of Christian superiority to other religions, the basis of Christian apologetics, the Bible as the basis for belief, and finally the adequacy of Jesus considered as the Christ. It is surprising, by the way, to find scholars shaped by the Catholic/Anglican traditions (as these authors are) actually basing their critique of Christology on the problems of historicity in the Gospels. Since when has "the historical Jesus" been the basis of Christology for these traditions?

In sharp contrast to Bowden, however, Meagher then turns to the task of "making Christianity true [as a verb]," an enterprise he terms "reconstructive Christianity," by which he means trying to find a way of maintaining Christian "faith" while no longer subscribing to the traditional pattern of Christian "belief." He begins bravely and with some fine observations on the positive functions of illusions, and on the many ways in which people personalize truth. But in reading his excellent argument, I was led to wonder: if other sorts of illusions can be healthful, and if individuals can legitimately approximate "truths" according to their own tailoring—as Meagher correctly notes—why can't

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the same positive functions apply to the traditional creed of Christianity as well? Why must these particular "illusions," that have meant so much to so many, and have managed to transform the lives of so many for centuries, be summarily abandoned?

This ambiguity makes Meagher's turn to "the truing of Christianity" problematic. After liberating faith from belief—or at least the public beliefs expressed in the Christian creed—Meagher discovers that "faith" is a surprisingly vague thing, particularly if even something as fundamental as "faith in God" is negotiable. How can it be filled out? Since the public creed of the church has been systematically discredited, Meagher gives faith substance by his own "anamnetic creed" (which, of course, he is not imposing on anyone), a set of statements so inclusive and banal that it could pass as prayer at a major divinity school chapel. If Bowden's criterion for the Christian future was a portmanteau notion of ethics, Meagher's criterion appears to be a personal standard of aesthetics.

I have called each of these books "liberal" in orientation. I am not using that designation as a red flag. In fact these books reveal an orientation that we associate with the best of what is termed liberalism: They are governed by perceptions shaped by a Christian humanism—especially in matter pertaining to the realization of human potential and equality—and concern themselves with the future even more than the past. Both authors explicitly state their conviction that Christianity is at a critical juncture, is in fact still young, and must equip itself for an indefinite future. Such concern is to be appreciated and respected.

The fundamental difficulty shared by these books, however, is one also increasingly identified with liberalism, which is a sort of carelessness. Here it shows itself in the failure to understand either the fragility or the function of tradition. Tradition—which is given expression by creed and ritual and institution—is a human construction, and therefore extraordinarily vulnerable. Its function is not to secure the past but to enable the future. And in its *transitus* through each generation's appropriation, transmutation, and communication, its symbols are dependent on a wholehearted love and allegiance simply to get from one generation to the next. Bowden and Meagher both acknowledge that individuals and communities alike constantly reshape, invigorate, transmute the symbols a community uses to define itself. Such is the natural and helpful way in which, by the grace of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Christianity grows into the future and, it is to be hoped, a more truthful expression of God's will.

One of the strangest features of these books is the odd way in which not the tradition but the assumptions of modernity are assumed to be valid and set the agenda for the discussion. Theology inevitably begins with humans' problems in understanding, accepting, and interpreting the statements of the creed. But theologians in earlier ages assumed that inquiry *within* that framework would yield a meaningful version of the creed for the inquirer and the church. It is startling to find persons calling themselves Christian theologians beginning (and ending) not with a wholehearted commitment to the community's tradition but rather with an unquestioning acceptance of the most hostile perceptions of criticism even while avowing allegiance to the tradition they are dismantling.

What is most painful in this is that a Christian tradition subject to systematic and *fundamental* savaging by its disaffected adherents necessarily becomes defensive for the sake of its survival, with the result that it does grow increasingly inflexible and crippled in its ability to perform its function of enabling the future. These authors' apparent unawareness of or unconcern for the fragility of all tradition, and their willingness to jettison huge chunks of it without suggesting anything remotely equivalent in its place suggests that their stated allegiance to Christianity is largely sentimental, and unfortunately provides further solid evidence why liberalism is not trusted by those who could benefit from it. Another meaning of "faith" is fidelity. The philosopher Gabriel Marcel has reminded us that fidelity, to be true, must be creative. But to be true it must also be loyal.

Joanne Lowery

Crossing to Capernaum

The boat rides high upon the waves.
The lake darkens, trading colors with the sky
as we lean against our rowing.

Rain pocks the surface,
a headwind rises.

Bereft of the summer sun
locust fall silent on the shore.
Warblers find an inner center
in their tree-grabbed nests.
We have nothing but floating timber.

More quickly than we ever learned anything
we must find a way to walk on water.
Even then it will be rough
as we high-step whitecaps all the way
to the slender beach.

We are all in the same boat.
A ghost passes us by.
We swing in the hammock of our fear,
clasping each other with dry arms.
Our words are bubbles blown across the water.

In disbelief we watch them bob away.
It is I: under his feet they sink.

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Learning to die, choosing to live

MEN ASTUTELY TRAINED
A History of the Jesuits in the American Century
Peter McDonough
The Free Press, $24.95, 616 pp.

David Toolan

Saints can do the most terrible, witless things. American Catholics have yet to take the measure of the mischief caused by the Oath against Modernism propounded in 1907 by the undeservedly canonized Pope Pius X. Until 1967 when Pope Paul VI abolished it, all seminary faculties swore to it annually, and with them the year's candidates for ordination. According to no less a figure than the late Hans Urs von Balthasar, the oath created an "atmosphere of terror" in the church at large, which, as effectively as an *auto-da-fé*, "methodically burned the Catholic spirit." For the church in North America, historians now agree, the impact was disastrous: for nearly fifty years, it produced intellectual retreat and theological sterility. And one consequence was that by midcentury, the mold of Catholic religious orders had grown so brittle and fragile that a question, any question, could shatter them like glass. As Garry Wills remarked in *Bare Ruined Choirs* (1972), "There could be no motion, because no change; no life, because no death.... One does not ease oneself into life, or into change.... One lives, if at all, by parturition, the pangs and sunderings; by successive resurrections, life out of death. Death to the past. The death involved in deciding, in moving, parting, breaking ties, breaking the mold. The Catholic church had not known death; and now, to know life, it has a lot of dying to catch up on."

When I dropped out of Columbia Law School in 1958 and joined the Society of Jesus, I was quite innocent of such things. But soon enough, after I began studying the fossilized remains of the Thomistic synthesis at Loyola Seminary in 1960, high atop a barren hill near Peekskill, New York, it began to be clear: I had entered an institution in the throes of catching up on its delayed dying in order to live. For decades, Jesuit seminarians had vented their frustrations with overregimentation, surveillance, and dry-rot scholasticism by resort to evasion, athletics, and stage plays lampooning the system. By the early sixties, none of these ritual releases was working, and burlesque had turned into open, bruising revolt. It took awhile before the tidal wave of disillusion hit the ranks of our elders hard at work in the field. When I left the asylum-like atmosphere of Loyola Seminary in 1962 for two of the happiest years of my life teaching at an upstate college, the Jesuit community there was still full of vitality and self-assurance; but later, in 1970, when I returned there after graduate studies, the community had fallen in on itself, become a hideout under siege. In the interim, the bottom had dropped out; my once fire-eating brothers had lost their bearings.

What had happened to bring us, the fabled "swift, light cavalry of Christ," so low? (There will be those who will gibe that bringing Jesuits to their knees is an overdue achievement.) In the course of the seventies, the number of American Jesuits fell by over a third, from eight thousand in the peak year of 1965 to about five thousand in 1980. During the same period, we changed from a rule-governed hierarchy to a role-driven network in which Jesuits, for the most part, search for tasks rather than being assigned to them. And in the process, our normative worldview—our sense of meaning, purpose, and community—has radically altered. The old spiritual ideal of unemotional, ramrod machismo no longer rules our psyches. And with the church as a whole after Vatican II, we have dropped our Counter-Reformation and anti-Enlightenment conservatism (with its preference for steady-state politics and economics), and shifted to the less conciliatory Left. In short, this is not the Order I entered in 1958. Thank God, I say. Because if it had remained what it was then, it would have meant choosing death, not life.

For some, of course, none of these changes is for the better, or for the glory of God. Lamenting over the disappearance of the ghetto Catholicism of yesteryear and reckoning Vatican II an unmitigated disaster, they will agree with Malachi Martin's thesis in *The Jesuits* (1987) that we've simply sold out, and that our new agenda is to subvert the papacy and turn the church into a wholly owned subsidiary of (at best) the Democratic National Committee or (at worst) the Marxist party. That inimitable champion of Gaelic charm and foible, the late Robert I. Gannon, S.J., would probably have accepted this embittered analysis.

But for the rest of us, the matter is closer to Garry Wills's insight about the life-giving effects of sunderings and breaking molds, of learning to die. Clearly, the forces of near terminal breakdown were already present in the late fifties, the accumulation of decades of dry rot, and if Vatican II had not come along to open the windows and breathe new air into the system, the law of entropy would have had the last word. Which doesn't mean that any of us who have passed through the trauma of recent years quite understands the event, or sees it whole. What we have needed and waited for—especially at a time when a mentality of "restoration" is abroad—is an analysis of where we have come from that enables us to count our losses, yes, but to lay certain things to rest, that is, to bury them forever.

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Otherwise, I fear that our energy will constantly be sapped by old business, the ghosts of a legalist, clericalist, and triumphalist church past: as if a Catholic's main duty were to conduct a never-ending funeral rite.

Peter McDonough's brilliant *Men Astutely Trained* goes a long way toward being the multiperspectival analysis and interpretation that I have been looking for. The book is a "study of the prelude to revolution," of the seemingly quiescent years from the turn of the century to the eve of Vatican II and the U.S. entry into the Vietnam War—when, coincident with the virtual end of the "American Century," Jesuits descended into a collective dark night of the soul. "This period," writes McDonough, a professor of political science at Arizona State University, "was the fulcrum time between past and present. Analysis of these deceptively quiet years reveals, as if in slow motion, the accumulation of tensions inherited not only from the Counter-Reformation but also conflicts that had been building up since the French Revolution and the onset of industrialization in the nineteenth century."

The tensions, McDonough shows, were built into the Order from its founding, the legacy of a top-down hierarchical system of governance clashing with an equally strong tradition of mobility and adaptability to concrete situations. From the beginning, then, hierarchical authority had always been in jeopardy of getting on the wrong side of the demands for autonomous action, intellectual probity, conscience, and emotional expression. So long as a basic consensus on the level of myth, symbol, and mission held, however, the tensions could be—and were—creative. In the aftermath of World War II, notably in the late fifties when swelling numbers of recruits (socialized during a period of abundance and by television) had to be initiated into "our manner of proceeding," the old tacit understandings, the very myth system of the Society, came undone; the tensions exploded. The usual needs that the organization prided itself in satisfying for its members—a sense of deep meaning, mastery, and emotional support—were no longer being met. "For a time, not only did Jesuits not know what they were doing—they didn't know who they were."

Throughout these pages, McDonough pursues Jesuits at work—in parishes and labor schools, in high schools and universities, in missionary activity and in journalism—who wrestled with three clusters of issues: (1) the basically arcadian economic and social philosophy inherited from Counter-Reformation conservativism which severely hamstrung them in dealing creatively with the "social question" in the United States; (2) the clash of a stoic spirituality of emotional constraint and long-suffering with home-grown American standards of emotional expressiveness; (3) issues touching on the institutional and ideological core of Catholicism as a binding force, that is, on the links between family and gender relations and the church's authority structure. "The abandonment of positions in these [sexual] issues," writes the author, "would come closer than alterations in social and political theory to a paradigm shift capable of transforming the being of Catholicism."

By way of the adventures, indeed the sometimes "manic psychodrama" of Joseph Husslein, Daniel Lord, John LaFarge, George Dunne, John Courtney Murray, Robert I. Gannon, William F. Lynch and many more, the author follows us "to the pit of [our] night, but has not gone beyond that." It is the tale of the demise of an old regime that, despite its lofty reputation within Catholic enclaves, was deeply flawed by professional incompetence and a paucity of ideas when it came to dealing with the wider horizon of secularized American culture. As the author envisions his account, it is the first act of a tragedy whose second act, following 1965, he does not much allude to (except in discussing Walter J. Ong's theories of gender relations and masculine dynamics). But more than that, this is an exemplary case study of the interaction between two cultures, Catholicism and the American way—"two cultures that have much in common, made up as they are of layers of the pragmatic and the transcendental." On this score, McDonough's theme, "the ambiguous meeting between a 'nation with

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the soul of a church' and a religious organization with a commitment to the mundane," deserves a wider audience than just Jesuits or Catholics.

My advice: Go directly to the swiftly moving narrative chapters, the bulk of the book, and save the preface and introduction (chock full of indigestible social-science jargon) until later when these categories will make more sense.

By midcentury, the erosion of ethnic ghettos, transformations in family structure, and the hugeness of organizations had chipped away at Jesuit identity and spun the Order into a crisis of character. On one level, the explanation for this phenomenon is simply a matter of demographics. Within the matrix of an immigrant church, Jesuits stood out and were immensely effective. The so-called social apostolate was never, McDonough demonstrates, more than a marginal side show. Through our schools—and our conviciton that knowledge and virtue went together—we were the gatekeepers for the American Dream. The author allows us to see the irony here, that is, the danger of a great project succeeding only too well. The heroics of a celibate way of life, he shows, were rooted in the tight-knit social structures of immigrant communities and their patriarchal Irish and German families. To be a Jesuit in such a context was a class act—and meant status and respect. We empowered generations of Catholic students (over 1 million graduates of Jesuit colleges and universities by 1980) to enter the mainstream of American life and, forthwith, that upward mobility (and the consequent suburbanization of the church) meant the dissolution of the very enclave Catholicism that had provided us with so much emotional ballast. Then, when we turned to the Society itself to make up the deficit here, its old asceticism of emotional distance and tough endurance was ill prepared to offer solace.

In a very real sense, we did ourselves out of a job—and the prestige and élan of leadership that had gone with it in the immigrant community. Idealistic younger Jesuits of my generation were accordingly offered slots in a system from which the juice of romance had drained away, and the alternative of missionary activity overseas only provided heroics for a minority. As for our former clients, well, they now had a multitude of other heroic options to consider, and no longer needed our expertise. Moreover, with the GI Bill and enrollment skyrocketing after World War II, our colleges and universities grew big—and increasingly out of our control. The provincial superior could no longer appoint a man to one of the colleges; and those there, often devoted to moral formation rather than to scholarship, chafed under the new regime of "publish or perish." We were not running the show, and our accustomed sense of competence and mastery flagged.

McDonough's documentation of our intellectual deficiency is the most forceful argument yet for a new generation of Jesuits to reclaim our mission as first-rate intellectuals, something that with a few exceptions, American Jesuits have never really been. The received wisdom had been that the Jesuit course of studies prepared a man to do just about anything. Not so. Already in the postwar era of fat union contracts, it had become glaringly clear that if Jesuits wanted to tackle the new economic and social issues of the time, they required professional skills that "the course" did not provide. At the same time, on the theological front, Gustave Weigel would excoriate sterile abstractions devoid of historical context and remote from contemporary questions—even as his friend John Courtney Murray, through his advocacy of historical change and pluralism, "cut the legitimacy out from under roughly half a century of antimodernist defensiveness and organizational encapsulation that had fortified the Counter-Reformation, anti-Enlightenment tenor of Catholicism." As Jesuits began searching for a new mission in a postimmigrant church, the inadequacy of "eternal verities" formulated in a time-bound, arcane, virtually private code, became all too obvious. Such an education qualified one for nothing so much as the welfare rolls. The sense of shock, of being cheated and left intellectually virginal in a complex cultural landscape that required a new level of competence and sophistication, cut across generational lines. Jesuits, astutely trained for leadership in an immigrant church, were ill-equipped and at a loss in confronting the larger, unprotected field of American society—and for some time, went into a tailspin, questioning our very reason for being.

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For all McDonough knows or can surmise, the Jesuit drama may not continue; or if it does, it may turn out to be a drag. The Society of Jesus, he suggests, "may have reached the terminus in the evolution of a species of religious life." That, he implies, would be tragic. But he ends on just the right note, citing Wendell Berry's comment that tragic drama simply reenacts the way communities survive actual tragedies. The test is to muster the imagination, the ceremony, to face the worst that can be suffered and borne. Without that, says Berry, there is no "consolation or forgiveness or redemption." Peter McDonough has done us the great favor of opening our eyes to the worst, and I shall forever be in his debt. I am also here to say that the self-questioning did not break us. □

DR. & MRS. NIEBUHR

REMEMBERING REINHOLD NIEBUHR
Letters of Reinhold & Ursula M. Niebuhr
Edited by Ursula M. Niebuhr
HarperSan Francisco, $29.95, 423 pp.

Richard Wightman Fox

Ursula Niebuhr is to be praised for shepherding these letters and recollections to publication. *Remembering Reinhold Niebuhr* is a very poignant document of a forty-year marriage that began in 1931, when Reinhold was a thirty-nine-year-old political journalist and star preacher at Union Theological Seminary and Ursula was a twenty-four-year-old student of theology from England. She believes that this compilation will "show what manner of man Reinhold Niebuhr really was," and will "disclose the quality of his humanity." It will also establish that Reinhold was a "devoted father" and that they had "a warm and happy" married life.

The preface and introduction announce these goals as the paramount purpose of the book. But the letters and memoirs themselves deliver a much more complicated message. It turns out that there is no simple answer to the question of who Reinhold Niebuhr really was. The particular quality of his humanity was its paradoxical mix of traits and achievements. His parenting and his husbanding were devoted, warm, and happy, but they were also marked by self-doubt and tension. The further one reads the more one concludes that the dust jacket flaps have it right.

"The uniqueness of Reinhold Niebuhr," reads the dust jacket text, "lay in the energy and zeal with which he pursued paradox and irony in both life and thought.... The German-American Anglophile. The religious-secular preacher chastising the pious and chiding the worldly.... The liberal crusader against liberalism. The Jamesian relativist who embraced the God of Abraham and the revelation of Jesus.... Truth could be expressed only in paradox, he believed, and life lived as a succession of pregnant contradictions." It is not just because I wrote those sentences—they have been borrowed word for word, without permission or attribution, from page 291 of my *Reinhold Niebuhr: A Biography* (1985)—that I find them so compelling. It is because the theme of paradox gets him right.

The dust jacket does not use all of what I wrote in my summation of Niebuhr's life and career. It leaves out the following sentences: "The prophet-priest seeking influence and humility.... The teacher-academic who distrusted the scholars and hoped for their respect.... The booming polemicist beset with hidden anxieties." Niebuhr himself was keenly conscious of these personal paradoxes, about which he reflected often. Ursula Niebuhr's preface and introduction miss the dialectical quality of his humanity by avoiding any mention of his feelings of pride, inferiority, and depression. But the book itself is very forthright about the last of these, as it is about the conflicts (as well as the warmth and hap-

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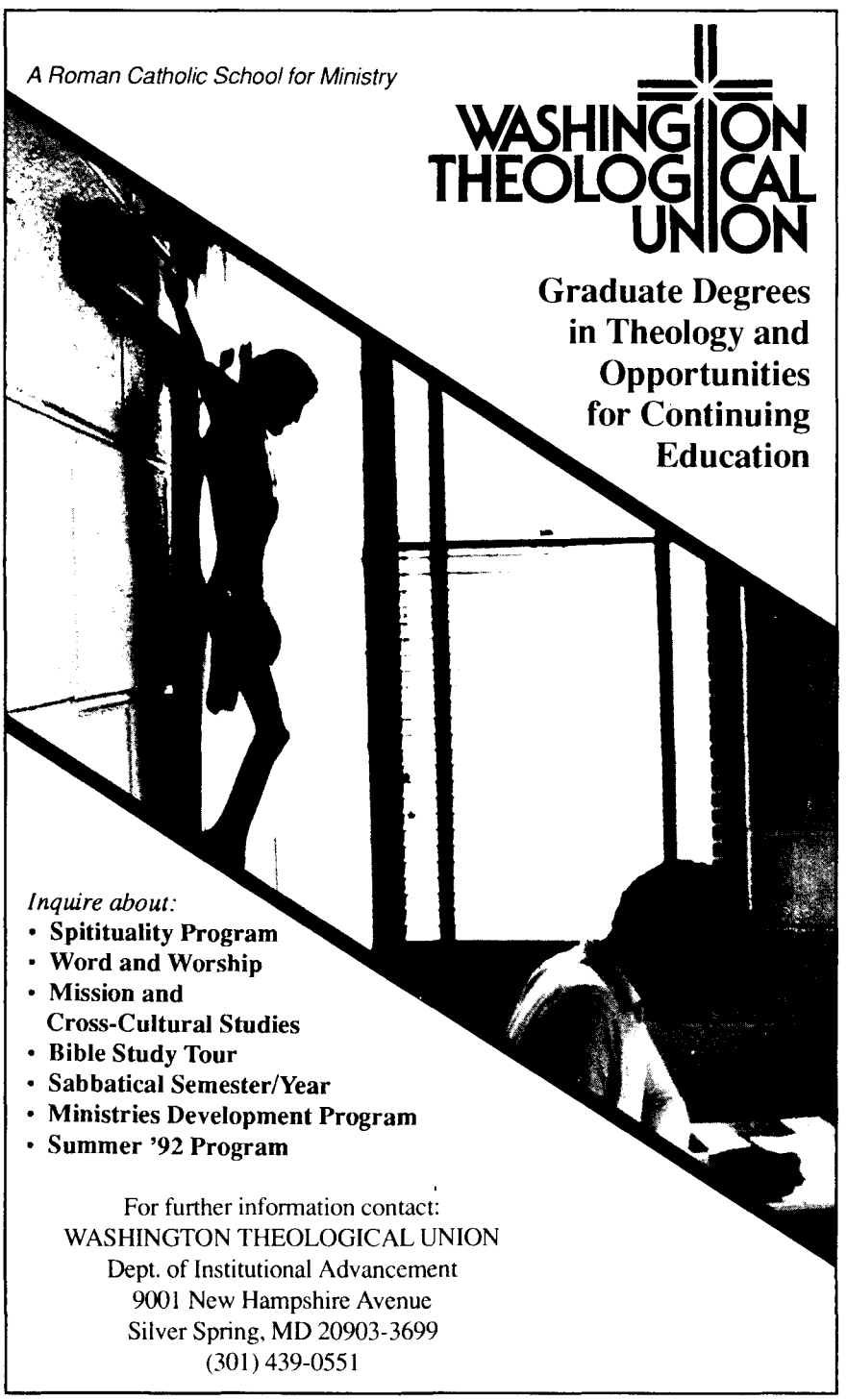
piness) that marked their marriage. It is to Ursula Niebuhr's credit that she has included so much material that works against her controlling thesis.

The Reinhold revealed in their engagement letters of 1931— by far the largest selection of letters in the book— is a man who was indeed transformed by joy, but also burdened by doubts and depression. He was afraid to part with his mother Lydia, who had lived with him as co-worker and companion for eighteen years, and he was predictably tongue-tied (as he keeps saying in the letters printed here) about expressing his deep love for Ursula. We are not sure we find out exactly how depressed or uncertain or elated Reinhold was, because Ursula has pruned and edited the letters that are published here, and left others out altogether (assuming they still exist). Overall, the engagement letters disclose a tense and troubled quest for communication. They are very moving documents because Reinhold again and again asks for forgiveness for being "bad" or insensitive, and they both again and again proclaim their love for one another despite all the disagreements, despite, indeed, Ursula's bleak prenuptial conclusion that "intellectual and psychological 'understanding,' even the scriptural 'understanding of the heart,' does not always carry with it emotional 'sympathy.'"

The tension does not end with the engagement. The letters included from the period of their marriage are unfortunately almost all from Reinhold, so there is even less exchange here between them. Reinhold does often express his love for wife and children, along with generally bland reports on his comings and goings. But occasionally Reinhold broaches something troubling. And the most significant problem he raises in the whole marriage correspondence draws no response from Ursula, either in a letter from the time or in her editor's commentary. In 1936 he writes her about a possible teaching job for her at Sarah Lawrence. "I honestly believe that you need to have a right to your own vocational work. Sometimes you do beat against the bars and that ought to teach us both that we must find the greatest amount of happiness together if you can feel yourself a little more independent of me. Am I right to say I think you go through alternations of wanting to merge your work with mine and then perhaps protesting against that?" No response from Ursula.

Despite her silence on that issue, the book tells us as much about what kind of woman Ursula Niebuhr was and is as it does about "what manner of man Reinhold Niebuhr really was." For one thing it shows Ursula to have literary talents, at least in the letter form, far superior to her husband's. Her letters are pithy, dense, whimsical, filled with unexpected transitions and mock-authoritative pronouncements. Reinhold's have little shape, spirit, or play. They often seem dutiful and tired, which stands to reason since so many of them were written while he was on exhausting trips.

The ultimate meaning of this collection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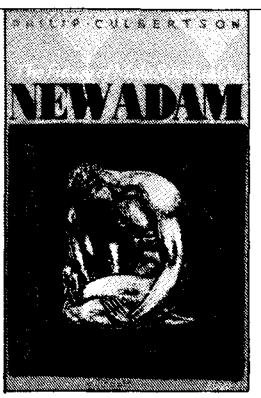
is that neither of them could make sense of themselves without the other. "I am really so much married," Reinhold wrote her in 1936, "that I feel as if I had lost my personal identity." The same thing happened to Ursula. Except that she has been widowed for twenty years and has had to conduct her continuing conversation with Reinhold alone. Two decades on her own has not lessened her comforting and confusing bond to Reinhold. The most moving single feature of this book is that she is still struggling to make sense of who she is and therefore who Reinhold Niebuhr was.

Her short memoir "Cheese and Dill Pickles" near the end of the book is an elegantly written and startlingly frank discussion of this problem. Framed as a "conversation" with Reinhold in which she addresses him directly, she writes lovingly about how he moves her. Then she embarks on a stream-of-consciousness but very controlled meditation on how "cynical" she has always been about family life—"more cynical than you. I had my suspicions about the family being all peace and love." She wonders how badly Gustav, Reinhold's father, disabled his brother H. Richard by locking him in a closet for punishment. She wonders how badly Reinhold himself may have hurt H. Richard by being such a dominant older brother. And she will not let us miss her own pain then or now. Just as Gustav and Reinhold took a toll on H. Richard, Reinhold made Ursula pay too. "To be quite frank, you were not particularly interested in me and my life. I mean, you were, I am frank to say, very much in love, but I don't think you were really interested in what I would call the archaeological, sociological, personal side of me—my family, my background.... So, we were very, very different. Which of course makes life, married life, more interesting. Yet, I realized I was more interested in your background and in your life than you ever would be in mine. I think this may continue with our children. I realize they are not very interested in my family."

The book ends with a short memoir called "Easter Memories," which stands in relation to "Cheese and Dill Pickles" as a resurrection to a crucifixion. At the end of "Cheese and Dill Pickles" she is starkly alone. Reinhold has loved her but not understood her, made a life with her but not been interested in her life. In "Easter Memories" she speaks beautifully of the paradoxes of Easter, the dying and the hope, the pretensions of dolled-up worshipers and the mystery of a new life that lies beyond death. Even better: she leaves us with the unforgettable image of a fellow Englishman, Colonel Dobie, who decided years ago to live in Jerusalem and preside over "the Garden tomb" to the north of the Damascus gate. It's not the place where Jesus is thought to have been laid, but Colonel Dobie stands guard there anyway.

No story could remind us more of Reinhold Niebuhr, who adored such accounts of simple, quixotic faith. In telling that story Ursula Niebuhr both reminds us of, and shows us how deeply she shares, the spirit of her husband. With Reinhold Niebuhr she had not just a relationship, but a mysterious sort of identity. There is no question that she has given us something in this volume that no one else could provide: an account of that part of him, inseparable from the rest, that was Ursula herself.

MODELS OF SPIRITUALITY



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CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING—I

SOCIAL CATHOLICISM IN EUROPE
From the Onset of Industrialization to the First World War
Paul Misner
Crossroad, $29.95, 362 pp.

THAT THEY BE ONE
The Social Teachings of the Papal Encyclicals 1740-1989
Michael J. Schuck
Georgetown University, $14.95, 224 pp.

John A. Coleman

The centenary year of *Rerum novarum* has just ended—a year that should have produced some ground-breaking scholarly work on Catholic social thought. Looking for something beyond the merely celebratory or produced for the anniversary, I am happy to have found these two books.

Paul Misner, professor of theology at Marquette University, has written a magisterial history, covering the period from 1840 to 1920, of the Catholic social movements in Belgium, France, Italy, Germany, and Austria. The roster of names—Romolo Murri, Franz von Baader, Frederick Ozanam, Armand de Melun, Leon Harmel, Donoso Cortes, Rene de la Tour du Pin, Franz Hitze, Karl von Vogelsang, Wilhelm von Ketteler, Mateo Liberatore (the primary author of *Rerum novarum*)—is a veritable roll-call of European social Catholicism. Misner carefully portrays the range of positions taken by social Catholics from socialists such as Philippe Buchez, to meliorists like the recently beatified Adolph Kolping, to reactionary corporatists like Vogelsang. Social Catholicism was at perpetual loggerheads with the thinking of the Manchester school of economics so the only real nineteenth-century "liberal" in this roster is Charles Perin of Louvain. There is also attention given to groups, to the stances of the Angers school, the Catholic Congresses of Liège, the *Patrons du Nord* (Catholic factory owners in France), the influential *Union de Fribourg* that did the required reflection and thinking that preceded *Rerum novarum*, and the social Catholic think tank in Munchen-Gladbach.

What emerges from this thorough treatment (unsurpassed in any language) is the close articulation between Catholic social thought and parallel secular movements as well as with the phases of European industrialization. To the old canard that *Rerum novarum* came too late, Misner responds: "In this chronological setting [later industrialization on the continent than in Great Britain], *Rerum novarum* did not come too late...; it came right before the rise of economic activity that would for the first time permit a modest rise in the standard of living of the ordinary worker in industrialized societies."

Papal social encyclicals, despite appearances, especially their stilted, near ahistorical language, did not descend from Vatican heights and papal insights. As texts they cannot be understood and interpreted without close attention to the vigorous debates that took place in Catholic unions, mutual aid societies, Christian Democratic parties, and at the yearly *semaines sociales* in France and the *Katholikentagen* in Germany. Misner supports this thesis in close detail for the proper reading of *Rerum novarum*.

And there are other details and themes that help the modern reader to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the Catholic social tradition. Contemporary Catholics, trying to link spirituality to social justice, may be instructed by the important place membership in the Third Order of St. Francis played in the lives of so many of the earliest social Catholics. Who knows that Pius X (the least socially enlightened of this century's popes) was on the very point of issuing an anti-trade union *Syllabus* as part of his anti-modernist campaign. Few have paid attention to the strange admixture of anti-Semitism and social Catholicism in Austria, and, later, as a part of integralism in France—a combination that seems a precursor to the same amalgam in America's Father Charles Coughlin during the New Deal. The lesson in all of this is that it will not do to read the

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texts of social Catholicism without some careful critique of its background ideologies.

Misner has written a gem of a book and whetted my appetite for volume 2 which will take us up to 1960 and the days immediately preceding Vatican II. Had the anniversary of *Rerum novarum* produced only Misner's book, it would have been ample enough—but Michael Schuck's book is a wonderful complement to Misner's.

Michael Schuck, professor of theology at Loyola University, Chicago, calls attention to the arbitrariness in dating Catholic social teaching from *Rerum novarum* and 1891. Popes, after all, have been writing encyclicals on social questions since 1740. Moreover, a great many encyclicals (for example, Pius XI's *Divini redemptoris* on atheistic communism or Paul VI's *Humanae vitae*) treat, in more than incidental ways, social issues related to the family, censorship, the mass media, etc. Schuck surveys every encyclical ever written to see if he can piece together a coherent social stance.

He divides the corpus into pre-Leonine, Leonine (from Leo XIII through John XXIII), and post-Leonine periods. He lays to rest several misconceptions. Against those who claim that the social thought in encyclicals has become more theological since Vatican II, he responds: the earlier periods are "no less theological"; "their theologies are simply different."

In a very original fashion, Schuck provides for the three periods ideal-types of theologies of God (the Shepherd, the Creator who sustains the order of the world, and the fellow pilgrim through history), of the attitude toward the world, the understanding of the church, and the sources of objective morality. He buries earlier claims that the key to understanding Catholic social thought lies in natural law (see, Roger Charles, *The Social Teaching of Vatican II*, Ignatius), or in master concepts of human dignity (see, David Hollenbach, *Claims in Conflict*, Paulist).

Nor is Schuck taken in by the rhetorical, "as the church has always taught." He shows that John Paul II's claim that the church has always taught the priority of labor over capital will not stand up to historical scrutiny. He documents contradictions and reversals of earlier teaching within the corpus of Catholic social teaching. Still he also finds a kind of coherence in the tradition, a coherence not just of texts but of argument. Although varyingly grounded, the encyclical tradition is at one in affirming an objective basis for morality (in tradition, in natural law, or in moral value) and a communitarian definition of the self; and at one in opposing atheism, secularization, the privatization of religion, and the claims of an amoral economics. Schuck argues that "a single world view may be the basis for a variety of theories." Each encyclical period displays a particular but varying slant on Catholic communitarian social ethics. Yet there are essential motifs: a coherent world view that links God to history and creation, supports claims to an objective grounding of morality against subjectivism and relativism, and insists that selves are embedded in communities. Schuck's volume will be indispensable for those interested in the theological grounding and coherence of Catholic social teaching. □

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING—II

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING AND ECONOMIC THEORY

Paradigms in Conflict

Mary E. Hobgood

Temple University Press, $34.95, 274 pp.

Nancy S. Barrett

Mary Hobgood's analysis of Catholic social teaching will hearten those who see fundamental flaws in capitalist society, who question the viability of market-oriented solutions for the Eastern European and Soviet economies, and who regard North-South, rather than East-West, tensions as the appropriate focus for critical analysis. In a careful and sometimes brilliant review of official Catholic teaching on the economy and the social order, Hobgood argues that there are conflicting theories in these documents that Catholic scholars fail to acknowledge.

In Hobgood's analysis, Catholic social teaching points inexorably to the conclusion that capitalism is essentially flawed, yet it continues to support a reformist, even conservative political agenda. She further argues that the hierarchy embraces this agenda because of an institutional pragmatism, sustained by a "relatively affluent, mostly white, and wholly male clerical perspective" which is threatened by the socioeconomic ramifications of the more radical criticisms running through the documents.

While the latter assertion signals Hobgood's own radical perspective and comes across as accusatory rather than analytical, her thesis of the juxtaposition of two essentially inconsistent paradigms within official church teaching is sound and original. Her book is a "good read" for those who have been involved in the many recent discussions of papal encyclicals and pastoral letters on the economy and social justice. It is also instructive to see the conservative policy prescriptions that continually emerge from what appears to be a critical analysis of capitalism.

Hobgood begins with *Rerum novarum* (Leo XIII, 1891), goes through the encyclicals of Pius XI, John XXIII, Paul VI, and John Paul II, as well as statements of Latin American bishops in the 1960s and '70s, and of Canadian and U.S. bishops in the '80s. What she calls the orthodox strand treats the economy as autonomous from the social and political spheres, justifies hierarchies in society, and sees the market, individual self-determination, and the profit motive as ideal arrangements for efficient resource allocation and production. Reformists in the orthodox strand see a failure in distribution as the fundamental problem with capitalism and understand the church's role to be that of a moral leader convincing elites to work for the common good.

The second and radical strand focuses

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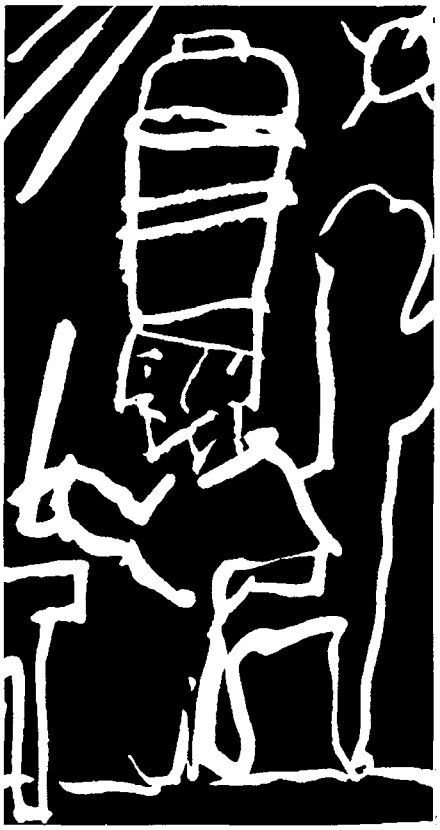

on the fundamental contradictions in capitalism's dynamics in which labor becomes a commodity and a privileged few who own the means of production continually force down wages in the pursuit of profits. The differing class interests within capitalist dynamics creates incentives to enforce hierarchies based on sex, race, and class; to engender colonial dependence in the third world; and to encourage military buildups that support both neocolonial strategies and the military-industrial complex. Since private ownership of the means of production is the source of economic misery for millions and of North-South problems, as well as the social oppression of women and minorities, there is in the radical strand no reform within capitalism that can deal with these problems in any but the most superficial way.

Rerum novarum was the first major church document to respond to the social upheaval associated with industrial capitalism. Before it appeared, the church had applied natural law philosophy and organic social theory in support of the status quo. However, in its ministry to the poor and marginalized, the church confronted a range of social problems that clearly needed attention and that also raised questions about the morality of a society in which such inequality was allowed to persist.

It is clear, as Hobgood moves through various papal encyclicals, that they all embrace some of the radical analysis of capitalism in attacking enormous concentrations of wealth and the "greed of unconstrained consumption" existing amid the "poverty of the masses." But they fail to break from the traditional support of private property—Hobgood argues that this is a misplaced extension of Aquinas's support for private ownership of land to private ownership of the means of production, which has quite different implications—and from the support of traditional social elites and hierarchical institutions. Thus she concludes: "as a consequence of both a need to preserve a social order in which an organic notion of justice could function, and the need to maintain institutional stability in times of rapid socioeconomic change, the Catholic church was afraid of the conclusions to which its own principles and analysis led."

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- **Mary Jo Leddy** — Reweaving Religious Life: Beyond the Liberal Model
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Later teachings deal with international issues in addition, emphasizing poverty in nations that had lived under a colonial yoke. In particular, the encyclicals of John XXIII and Paul VI dwell on North-South relations, and in some ways represent the most radical teachings on social reform. Although they began to move away from the organic and hierarchical models of social organization, urging grassroots struggles and indigenous liberation movements, these encyclicals continued to support private ownership of the means of production. The bishops of Latin America and Canada have espoused more radical approaches. For example, *Ethical Reflections on the Economic Crisis* (1983), attributed Canada's economic decline to a "structural crisis in the international system of capitalism," and advocated grassroots involvement "to acquire communal control over the necessary means of production." *Economic Justice for All: Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy* (1986) contained a radical diagnosis, but offered orthodox solutions such as redistribution strategies. Hobgood writes, "The U.S. bishops were able to sustain the compatibility of radical diagnosis and liberal prescriptions because, like John Paul II, they would not agree that economic systems are also systems of social relations that specify certain relationships between persons and groups and preclude others." The Latin American and Canadian bishops, on the other hand, were operating in political environments with a wider spectrum of opinion. The U.S. bishops "had to contend with the organized voice of neoconservative American Catholics."

Hobgood argues, perhaps too optimistically, that the internal dynamic of capitalism ultimately will force the church to take up the radical strand as the model for shaping its social teaching. Yet there are no signs that the conservative tide of Catholic social teaching has shifted in any fundamental way. John Paul II's *Centesimus annus* (May 1991) explicitly repudiates Marxist analysis and celebrates East-West rapprochement while advocating reformist solutions to North-South problems. This analysis is seriously at odds with the failure to eliminate poverty and social distress and with the resiliency of radical social theory in the third world.

I think Hobgood is correct in the view that the commitment of the church to an organic social theory that justifies hierarchy, supports the patriarchal family, and tolerates a racist and sexist social order is a major impediment to a critical analysis of capitalism. But there is also a failure of the church to acknowledge "that ethical norms and values have different meanings depending on the social theory that informs them." Hobgood's original and valuable contribution is this recognition of the church's failure to take account of the existence of two competing paradigms within the same body of teaching as well as to acknowledge that the language of its teachings and the policies it supports have cultural and ideological contexts themselves.

COMING

February 14

Alexander Santora interviews Anna Quindlen

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REVIEWERS

DAVID TOOLAN, S.J., *is associate editor of* America *magazine and director of the Catholic Book Club.*

RICHARD WIGHTMAN FOX *is professor of history and director of the American Studies graduate program at Boston University. He is at work on a history of liberal Protestantism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.*

JOHN A. COLEMAN, S.J., *is professor of religion and society at the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley.*

NANCY S. BARRETT *is provost and vice-president for academic affairs at Western Michigan University. She holds a Ph.D. in economics from Harvard University.*

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Who is Jesus & what does he want?

Lawrence S. Cunningham

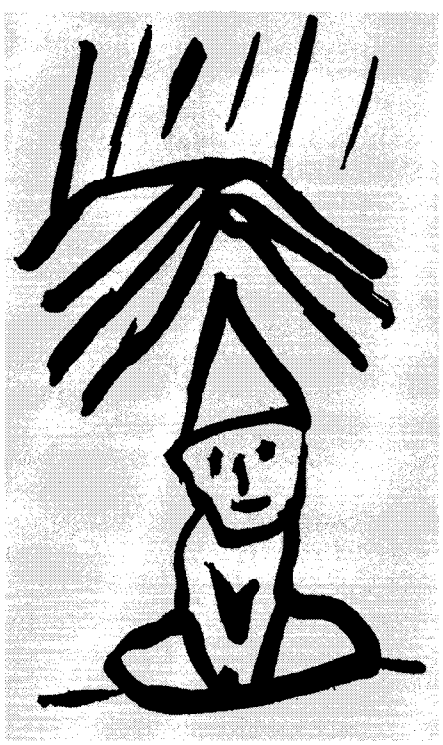
A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus (Volume 1), *by John P. Meier, Doubleday, $25, 486 pp.*

The first volume of Meier's work is a major piece of Catholic biblical scholarship. The "search" for the historical Jesus is a century old and the amount of scholarship that has been part of the search is enormous. What Meier attempts is, simply, to look again at this century of productive labor and rethink the answer to this simple question: using the best historical methodology possible, what can we know, with the certainty that history allows, about Jesus? By putting methodological brackets around faith and the tradition of faith (Meier is a Catholic priest) he assesses the evidence presented to us from the world in which Jesus lived. This first volume gets us up to the moment of the emergent public life of Jesus; a life which will be the focus of Meier's second volume.

The first part of this volume looks at sources. It judges the historicity of the canonical Gospels, the scattered references in pagan literature, the witness of Josephus, the allusions in the Jewish Talmud, the value of the apocryphal writings, and, most importantly, the criteria for judging the historicity of the sayings of Jesus. That latter task is most demanding since, as Meier notes, the criteria are crucial in order to avoid circular reasoning, philosophical prejudice, or academic fashion. It should come as no surprise that he is dubious about the work of the so-called "Jesus Seminar" and its attempt, through scholarly consensus, to decide what are and are not authentic *logia* that go back to Jesus.

Part 2 begins at the beginning: Where was Jesus born? What were the social conditions of his upbringing? What did the culture of Galilee look like? How do we judge the question of the family of Jesus with respect to his birth, his putative father (Joseph), and his brothers and sisters? Can we sort out the chronology of his life (a notoriously vexatious issue)? What language(s) did he speak and how much education, if any, did he have? Meier takes up these questions in turn, surveys the best thinking of scholars (his footnotes are a treasure), sifts his sources, and renders his considered judgment.

Meier is meticulous and prudent, and openly impatient with tendentious conclusions based more on imagination than on hard evidence or rigorous thought. There is an added bonus: he can write. His chapters are just long enough to say what he wants to say and his material is set out with clarity and orderliness. At the end of each chapter he sums up his conclusions for those who might get lost in the detail of his exposition.



American Catholic biblical scholarship has been singularly blessed by great scholars (Raymond Brown, Joseph Fitzmyer, Roland Murphy, etc.) who have pioneered the biblical renewal of this country. Meier is part of the younger generation who carry on that work at a continued level of deep learning and concern for the church. I suspect that this book (and the subsequent volume) will be in the library of every serious student of the Scriptures and theology as the work on the historical Jesus that most judiciously sums up what we can know about the man who in the Spirit we call Lord.

Most of us, I suspect, have been shaped in our thinking about the Gospel of John by the massive commentary of Raymond Brown for the Anchor Bible series. That commentary, however, is a generation old and much has been written on John since that time, including the further work of Brown himself. We are grateful, then, for Gerard Sloyan for his (always) readable and wide-ranging survey of recent Johannine scholarship.

What Are They Saying About John?, *by Gerard S. Sloyan, Paulist, $6.95, 125 pp.*

Sloyan's opening chapter surveys the "landmark" commentaries on John from the beginning of World War II to the present. Chapters 2 and 3 deal with John's sources and John as religious writer; the former chapter is the more technical of the two. A final chapter surveys the literature dealing with thematic issues in John. Sloyan's conclusions about the contemporary contours of Johannine scholarship can be briefly summarized: an emerging consensus about the essentially Jewish character of John despite the Hellenistic patina and his anti-Jewish polemics; a keen

LAWRENCE S. CUNNINGHAM *chairs the Department of Theology at the University of Notre Dame.*

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interest in the community from which John derives and lessening of interest in the relationship of John to the synoptics; and, for Sloyan most significantly, a turn toward John from the perspective of literary style in order to consider the Gospel as a narrative/story.

Students of the Bible who cannot hope to master the river of Johannine scholarship but whose interest in the Gospel is deep, can only express gratitude for the economical bibliographical tour provided by this book. (I have already checked off some items from the bibliography as "must read.")

Dermot Lane, an Irish theologian, is well known in this country as both teacher and author. His book, as he tells us in the introduction, has two very admirable goals: to mediate between Christological scholarship and discipleship and to bring into closer focus theology and liturgy. In other words, Lane wishes to close the gap between what theologians say and what the community witnesses to and prays about.

Christ at the Centre is topical rather than systematic. He provides two rather full chapters on the reign of God considered biblically and reflected upon theologically. A further two chapters consider the cross as revelation of God and the Resurrection as gift (the latter particularly fine); a chapter on the Paschal Mystery is a textbook example of how to blend theology and liturgy into a creative whole. The final essay on the Incarnation is the best of all as Lane meditates on the mystery of the Word become flesh in terms of the doctrine of creation and sacramentality and the consequences (e.g., for an ecological ethic) deriving from such an angle of vision. I suspect that this approach to Christology which takes seriously the ancient image of the *Pantokrator* (the One who "holds all things in his hand") will get fuller treatment by theologians in the future.

Christ at the Centre: Selected Issues in Christology, *by Dermot Lane, Paulist, $8.95, 167 pp.*

Lane's book can be warmly recommended for its solid theological fare, its pastoral urgency, and its jargon-free writing. The book ends with a very modest bibliography and a full index. I noted only one error which national pride demands correcting: Theodore Roethke was not a German poet but an American whose first efforts appeared, years ago, in the pages of this journal.

A dustjacket blurb on Bosch's book describes it as a *Summa Missiologica*. Such blurbs tend to the baroque but in this case the reader was right on target. This is an enormously long and extremely detailed work on Christian mission(s) which repays the effort it takes to get through the whole of it; those who fail in the effort should at least have it on their shelf as a reference work.

Bosch does three things: (1) He argues at length that the church, as it is depicted in the New Testament, is missionary by structure although that missionary character is as various as the theologies found in the New Testament; (2) Bosch, utilizing Küng's periodization of church history, provides a history of the missionary enterprise in Christianity giving fair attention to the Catholic, Orthodox, and Reformed tradition; and (3) he surveys the contemporary scene of missiological thinking in order to explicate a contemporary theology of mission.

Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission, *by David J. Bosch, Orbis, $24.95, 219 pp.*

Of those three sections, the first (on the New Testament) is necessary but the least interesting since it only pulls together much scholarship that we know from elsewhere; the second is fascinating as history and reflects the author's full command of the literature; and the third is a masterly summary of contemporary theology as Bosch attempts to set out the new paradigm of a theology of mission.

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current mission thinkers now more fully understand (and worry about) the relationship of modern missions to colonial enterprises just as they reject the hegemony of Western culture as the model for missionary work. Theorists of contextualization (should we follow a mission model that seeks to express an indigenous church or work for new models of socio-economic life?) and those of inculturation (what does a truly Asian Christianity look like?) bump up against the far more difficult questions raised by the "History of Religions" school which asks whether, say, Christianity should even try to insert itself in, say, a Hindu culture. Those issues present thorny questions about everything from the relationship of the individual church to the Great Church to the raging debate about the singularity of Christ and his salvation.

Bosch treats all of these issues in great and sympathetic detail but with a critical eye (his critique of the shortcomings of contemporary theorists is as good as his capacity to describe their notions fairly). In the end, however, Bosch stands firm for a missionary Christianity in which "missionary" is free from the defects of older paradigms and more comfortable with the abolition of the distinction between "sending" and "receiving" churches. He calls for a church in mission in the widest possible ecumenical sense that sets out a view of the Christian life that is both transcendent and immanent.

If it is true, as Karl Rahner would have it, that our era marks the beginning of the World Church (*Weltkirche*) and the end of the Eurocentric church, then books like this one are of supreme importance as we think about the future of Christianity. I think Rahner is correct and, for that reason alone, welcome this work as it helps me to understand how, as a Christian, I might act locally but think globally.

David Granfield's book on mysticism is not conservative but it is very traditional. I say "traditional" not as a pejorative label but to describe a work which understands mysticism from within the Christian framework as a "heightened consciousness of a loving union with a transcendent and triune God...more intimate than usually afforded by graced reason and revelation." Granfield has well-argued chapters on the epistemology of mystic consciousness, the difference between kataphatic (image-based mysticism) and apophatic ("dark" or imageless mysticism) experiences; the specific character of Christian mysticism and its place in the larger life of the Christian.

Heightened Consciousness: The Mystical Difference, *by David Granfield, Paulist, $12.95, 219 pp.*

I especially liked his notion that the true Christian mystic is anaphatic (the word is his), i.e., one who comes back from prayer into the world with a heightened sense of the presence of God in order to bear witness. For Granfield, there is something flawed about any mystical experience which would be the product of either an elite effort or one unconcerned with the entire life of the church as a locus of Christian witness. In fact, were I to fault his work it would be that he did not expand more generously his discussion on the relationship of mysticism to the apostolate of the church since that relationship of mysticism to ecclesiology is a most important one.

He urges a further point which strikes me as unimpeachable: mysticism and holiness are not synonymous terms. There are persons of great holiness who are not mystics (and vice versa!). For Granfield, there is only a *natural* distinction between the mystical life and the ordinary Christian life with the former a result of either a connatural appetite for such consciousness or a cultivated state as one enters into a regimen of serious prayer. Thus, this book sets out a revisionist understanding of the older discussions of infused contemplation by a more holistic approach to the subject.

There is a wide scattering of books available on mysticism but, alas, too many of them are either tendentiously argued or hopelessly unsophisticated or, even, psychologically dangerous. Granfield knows how to discriminate and his work shows wide acquaintance with the better literature on the subject. If one were to ask for a solid, careful, if somewhat technical, first book on Christian mysticism this would be the one I would suggest assuming the inquirer had at least a modicum of theological education as background. This is not a history of Christian mysticism nor a "how to" manual, nor is it "mysticism made easy." It is, to describe it succinctly, what used to be called in an earlier curriculum, a systematic treatment of mystical theology and should be read as such.

Bacik's book is a welcome reprint of a 1989 edition published by Thomas More Press. Its subtitle ("An Overview of Influential Twentieth-Century Thinkers Who Have Helped Shape Christian Dialogue") is helpfully descriptive: Bacik treats eighteen theologians and philosophers who have influenced the way theology is done. Rightly, he includes the dialogical theology of Buber and the activist thought of Gandhi, but the majority of his chapters are on a range of Christian thinkers from Whitehead and Maritain to contem-

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porary figures like Rahner, Gutierrez, Küng, and Tillich. Each person treated is biographically and intellectually profiled with a summation of the thinker's leading ideas, how they touched on others. Each chapter has a series of discussion questions. The chapter then concludes with a brief annotated bibliography of primary sources. I have found this book extremely useful (as have some of my colleagues) for classroom use. Before a discussion of a text, for example, from Lonergan or Barth, I would have students read Bacik's entire chapter on these thinkers for context. They were greatly appreciative of his clear prose, his capacity for rendering difficult concepts into intelligible language, and, most of all, his suggestions for further study in the original texts.

Contemporary Theologians, *by James Bacik, Triumph Books, $14.95, 292 pp.*

Contemporary Theologians, then, is very helpful for the teacher and student. Those interested in getting an overview of a particular thinker as a prelude to deeper study would also find the work useful. Bacik is a trained theologian (he studied under Rahner) who is also a university pastor. As a consequence he knows theology at a deep level and, given the exigencies of his position, he also can communicate.

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 2)

posium made no deeper analysis of this question.

Shame on you for being so one-sided! I have no use for such phony liberalism and would like my name removed from your subscription lists.

JAMES J. WILLIAMS, M.D.

Polemics don't help

Vancouver, B.C.

To the Editors: Embarrassment is the word that captures my response to Dennis O'Brien's and Jean Bethke Elshtain's "Against Gay Marriage I and II." While Brent Hartinger turned out a serious, well-argued case for gay marriage bolstered by corroborative examples and cautious caveats against abuses that might undermine the norm of heterosexual marriage, his opponents indulged in a farrago of outlandish polemics that degrade the issue and the persons involved.

What light, for example, can O'Brien's focus on the Hollywood marital high jinks of Kurt Russell and Goldie Hawn shed on the essential problems of gay marriage? Again, arguing from the norms of the Athenian *polis* or discoursing on *Playboy* and Puritanism is so much wanton dust in the eyes. When O'Brien grandly concedes that "perhaps homosexual relations are better sex" and cites Oscar Wilde on masturbation as enlightening guru we progress from the bizarre to the aberrant.

But Jean Bethke Elshtain is no slacker here. Citing Madonna's proclamation that "mock masturbation before tens of thousands is 'freedom of expression'"—an intimation of things to come, the "slippery slope," if society legalizes gay marriage—she associates the grotesque with the reasoned proposal of her opponent. And what do the "technologizing of birth" and threats of "wholly untrammeled pluralism" have to do with serious debate of the subject at hand? The reader is left adrift in rant and repugnant caricature when we need the kind of solid and sober argumentation that characterized Brent Hartinger's article.

Commonweal must do better on this one. Surely there are writers who can grant the dispute the justice it deserves.

(REV.) JAMES R. ROBERTS

The author replies (I):

The Reverend James R. Roberts complains about a lack of serious treatment of a serious issue. His reaction is altogether predictable. As I suggested in my original statement, we have an almost impossible time attaining any balance on sexual issues. Sex drives us out of our minds in idealistic romance and utter silliness. For every literary tragedy of wayward passion there is an equal and opposite sexual farce.

I am not sure how to be fully serious about sex but I suspect, like Walker Percy, that a certain sense of the wild and humorous on this and all serious issues is proper for mere humans. If there is anything that is damaging serious discussion of sexual issues it is the *solemnity* with which the subject is treated by Puritan detractors and *Playboy* enthusiasts. It is a toss-up which is more baleful, those old-line pulpit exhortations against sex or Dr. Ruth urging us on to ever greater orgasms.

I suggest that if Roberts would stop being solemn, he might discover the seriousness of my article and Professor Elshtain's. My questions were:

What is the meaning of marriage? It is not only pop-stars who seem to have transcended marriage. I suggest that there is broad confusion in the marriage bureaus and the divorce courts about its meaning (if any).

What is the meaning of sexuality—homosexual or heterosexual? I aver seriously—even solemnly—that this is a subject radically unattended to.

Roberts somehow thinks that Athenian homosexual customs, Puritan strictures, and *Playboy* permissiveness are "wanton dust" to the argument. Right or wrong, the above-mentioned stake out philosophies on sexuality that somebody ought to attend to in these discussions if we are to move beyond "rant."

DENNIS O'BRIEN

The author replies (II):

The Reverend James R. Roberts seems quite adept at boosting and anathematizing. But he needs a quick refresher course in how to read a text. My essay explicitly *rejected* slippery slope claims. Instead, I presented one version of a feminist case, grounded in civil philosophy, for the view that societies have an enormous stake in preserving symbols of social regenesis associated with the intergenerational family. I insisted, for that is what civic philosophers must do to be true to their vocation,

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that any and all arguments for or against gay marriage, or surrogacy arrangements, or eugenic reproduction, or other possibilities our culture throws up *must* be evaluated as part and parcel of the current American *Zeitgeist* in which wants become rights and rights are trumps. I throw down a right; you lose. There are deeper issues at stake and they must be taken up with appropriate *gravitas*. If Roberts believes he can come up with a single instance of "rant and repugnant caricature" in my comments, he is welcome to try. If he wants a model of what such a a caricature looks like, he might consider re-reading his own letter.

JEAN BETHKE ELSHTAIN

Biology isn't all

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: Brent Hartinger argues a compelling case for gay marriage by listing several concrete, positive, and practical benefits for homosexual people, society, and even family structures and values. His opponents appeal to supposed threats to the normative status of heterosexuality from certain sanctions of gay marriages. But they also raise profound issues of the meaning of human nature, sexual morality, and the nature of society itself—all of which are crucial elements in the discussion.

Opponents all agree that a middle ground of limited societal recognition of gay marriages might be possible without necessarily equating homosexual and heterosexual acts or sliding down the slippery slope to the moral enervation feared in displacing the legal and moral uniqueness of heterosexual marriage and the biological family. The compromise in a pluralistic society might be a legal marriage which, contrary to Hartinger's claim, *would* "celebrate" and "endorse" homosexual sexual behavior. Otherwise we would view marriage solely as a legal matter, and a matter of "indifference," at that. But would such a "marriage" in any real way threaten the primacy of heterosexual marriage and social regeneration?

The question of a public religious sanction, especially in the Catholic sacramental tradition, is more problematic. The reality of a sacramental blessing for a nonreproductive heterosexual marriage is not with-

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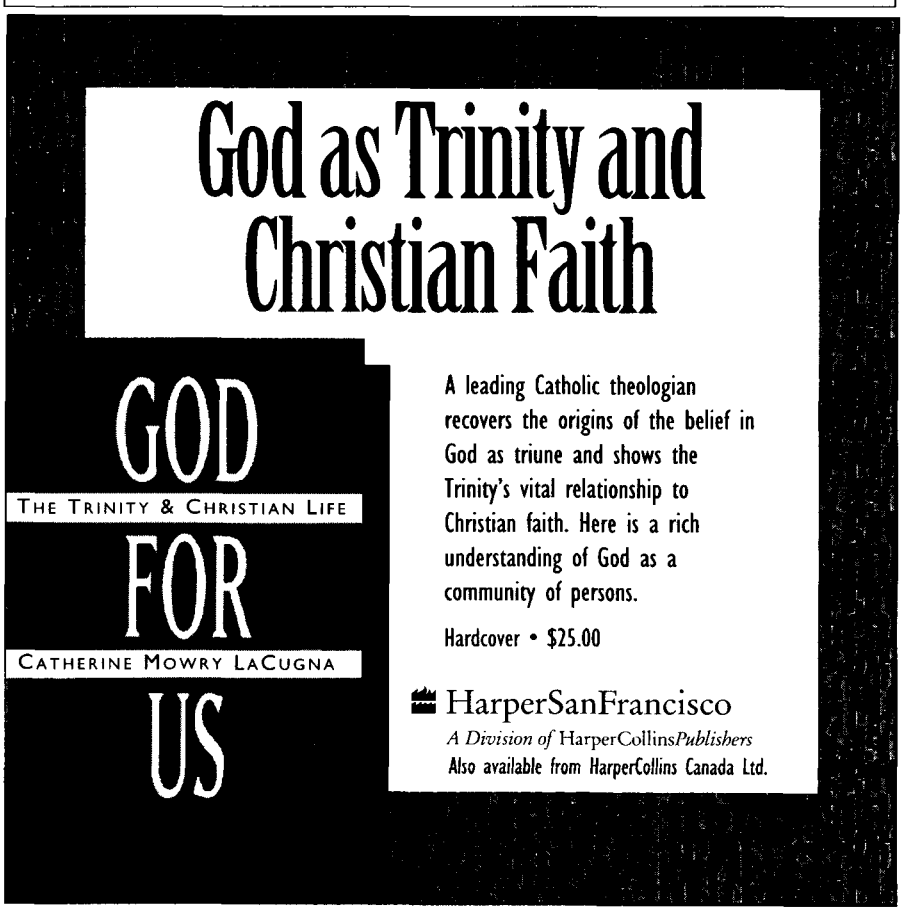
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out relevance, however, to evaluating same-gender relationships. Marriage and family as a "*communio personarum*" exist even prior to and even apart from biological offspring. The U.S. Catholic bishops teach that "covenant love endures and is creative in ways distinct from biological parenthood" and that genital love of married couples can and ought to be "fruitful or creative in a variety of ways even when the procreation of children is not possible." Like childless heterosexual couples, same-gender couples can experience "the mystery of the other" and the "joys of human creation" if we are to take their testimony seriously.

The bottom line is the meaning and value found in or given to the physiological and biological differentiation of the male and female human bodies. Is there really an "*ur*-text" of genital biology which (apart from biological reproduction) *essentially* makes heterosexual life patterns different from homosexual life patterns? And what of the homosexual identity/orientation itself, which is claimed to be authentically, though not statistically, as much a part of the human artifact of "sex with a biological base" as heterosexual orientation? As long as we do not know beyond serious question how to evaluate homosexual relationships and acts psychologically, sociologically, or theologically, the question of the validity of a heterosexual norm based on biology remains. ROBERT NUGENT

The writer directs the Center for Homophobia Education in New York City.

Takes two to tangle

Delran, N.J.

To the Editors: Janet Baxendale writes, in regard to the McCabe *vs.* Steinfels debate ["A further exchange of views," December 6, 1991], that the party of resistance and the party of change should begin to talk to one another on the issue of married priests. She doesn't seem to realize that Rome has ordered all dialogue between bishops (the party of resistance) and CORPUS (the party of change) to cease. CORPUS has always been ready to dialogue. Not so the bishops—except for a few, and that only recently. And Rome put a stop to that!

"Refresh my memory, Fielding, How many does it take to tango?"

P. David Finks is naive when he asks why bishops don't call on married priests to serve on diocesan committees and councils. Bishops have been known to fire the *wives* of married priests from diocesan jobs when their status became known. *A fortiori....* MARY LOUISE HARTMAN

The writer is president of the Association for the Rights of Catholics in the Church.

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ST JOSEPH'S CHURCH IN GREENWICH VILLAGE

RESTORATION SERIES 1992 PART ONE

1. The Choir of Saint Thomas Church Fifth Avenue, Reverend John Andrew, D.D., Rector, Dr. Gerre Hancock, Director. This world-famous choir of boys and men will offer this special concert of sacred music as the premiere presentation of the entire series.
Monday, January 20th, 7:30 P.M.

2. The Reverend Richard J. Neuhaus, Scholar, Author, Editor, FIRST THINGS, Journal of Religion and Public Life. Topic: "The Catholic Moment: No Guarantee."
Tuesday, February 4th, 7:30 P.M.

3. The Anonymous Four, This acclaimed *a capella* medieval vocal quartet will present "An English Ladymass: 13th and 14th Century Chant and Polyphony in Honor of the Virgin Mary."
Friday, February 14th, 8:00 P.M.

4. The Reverend Richard J. Dillon, S.S.D., Biblical Scholar, Author, Chairman, Department of Theology, Fordham University. Topic: "Jewish People and Jewish Religion in the Background of the Gospels."
Wednesday, February 19th, 7:30 P.M.

5. Bishop Patrick J. Ahern, D.D., Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of New York. Presider at Evening Prayer with Reflection. Topic: St. Therese of Lisieux: "The Greatest Saint of Modern Times."
Wednesday, February 26th, 7:30 P.M.

6. Margaret O'Brien Steinfels, Author, Editor, COMMONWEAL magazine. Topic: "The Unholy Alliance Between Right and Left in the Catholic Church."
Tuesday, March 3rd, 7:30 P.M.

7. The Greenwich Village Singers, Mark Mangini, Director.
This celebrated choral group will present a concert featuring Poulenc's "Lenten Motets" and works by Palestrina, Monteverdi, and Purcell.
Friday, March 13th, 8:00 P.M.

8. His Eminence, Francis Cardinal Arinze, D.D., President, Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. Celebration of the Eucharist.
Wednesday, March 18th, 5:30 P.M.

9. Bill Reel, Author, Columnist, NEWSDAY.
Topic: "Reform and Renewal: A View From the Grassroots."
Tuesday, March 31st, 7:30 P.M.

10. New York Baroque, Michael Ishizawa, Artistic Director.
An outstanding performance on period instruments of sacred music in the time of Monteverdi will be presented, featuring works of Monteverdi, Grandi, Rovetta, and Rigatti.
Friday, April 3rd, 8:00 P.M.

11. Bishop William H. Lazareth, Metropolitan New York Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church. Topic: "The Cross as a Christian Life-Style."
Thursday, April 9th, 7:30 P.M.

12. Leonardo Defillipis, Actor, Producer, Saint Luke Productions, Beaverton, Oregon. This accomplished actor will present "The Passion According to Luke" in a unique one-man dramatization of the death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ taken verbatim from the Gospel.
Palm Sunday, April 12th, 4:00 P.M.

13. Eileen Egan, Author, Lecturer, PAX CHRISTI, THE CATHOLIC WORKER, CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES. Topic: "Peace: When the Church Lost Its Way."
Wednesday, May 6th, 7:30 P.M.

14. The New York Debut Orchestra Chamber Ensemble, Dr. Roberto DeBarros, Director. These accomplished musicians will present an evening of works by Mozart, featuring "Concerto No.2 in A" and Haydn's "Symphony No. 73 in D Major."
Friday, May 15th, 7:30 P.M.

15. Bob Guccione, Jr., Editor, Publisher, SPIN Magazine. Topic: "Is Rock and Roll. as Evil as They Say It Is?"
Tuesday, May 19th, 7:30 P.M.

16. The Right Reverend Richard F. Grein, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of New York. Presider at Evening Prayer with Reflection.
Wednesday, June 3rd, 7:30 P.M.

17. The Reverend Aldo J. Tos, Ph.D., Pastor, St. Joseph's Church in Greenwich Village. Topic: "The Catholic Church: Past and Present Challenges and Responses."
Wednesday, June 10th, 7:30 P.M.

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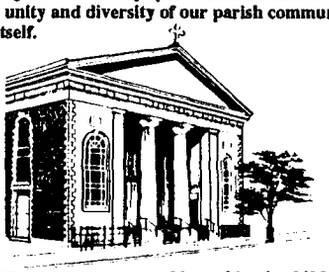

371 Sixth Avenue, New York, NY 10014

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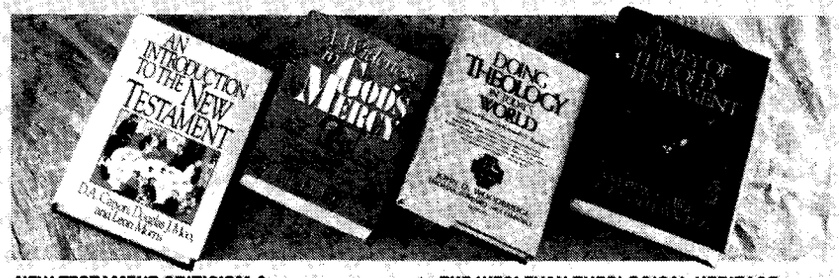

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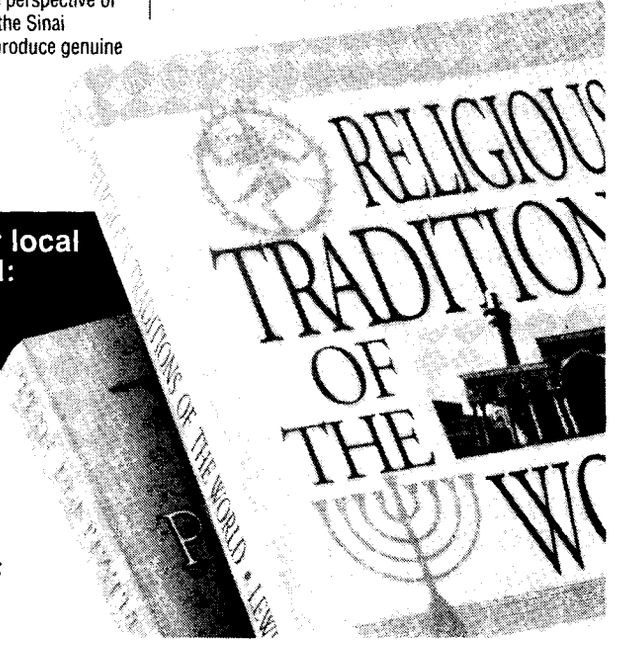

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